

ON THE HOOGHLY



CALCUTTA 1913 FROM A PAINTING BY THE AUTHOR

ON THE HOOGHLY

By

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ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR

LONDON

PHILIP ALLAN

69, GREAT RUSSELL STREET

First Published in 1935

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
MACEAYS LIMITED, CHATHAM

DEDICATION

I SHALL dedicate this book to Jimmy Keymer.

All through the South-West Monsoon the gulls who keep us company at the Sandheads are small white fellows with black heads. But when the North-East Monsoon has quite set in, a big, greyish-brown gull makes his appearance. We called him Jimmy Keymer, after an old pilot of long ago who was extremely skilful in his day and had become a legendary hero. October is a cyclone month. The early part of November is not too safe as to weather. But when Jimmy sails into view we know that we are all right, and that the North-East Monsoon is really in. In grateful recognition of his friendly reassurance in many successive years I dedicate this book to him.

PREFACE

WHETHER this book will provide entertainment for those who read it I cannot say, but I know that I have enjoyed writing it. I doubted at first whether I should be able to recall a sufficient number of incidents to make the effort worth while. But rather to my surprise I found, on looking into the storehouse of my memory, that the happenings of long ago were very carefully preserved, and that the real difficulty was to select from the mass those incidents and impressions which would be likely to prove interesting to others.

Once, when I was on board a French barque, where as usual I was being treated with great hospitality, I commented on the fraternal feeling which unites the mariners of all nations. Said the Captain : "*Oui. Nous avons tous les mêmes misères.*" Happily on looking back, *les misères* fade into oblivion, and the happy moments and joys of the past shine more brightly with increasing years.

I have purposely omitted any account of my life before joining the Bengal Pilot Service. It may be taken for granted that I was born in the usual manner, had the usual amount of trouble in acquiring my teeth, and gave the usual amount of trouble to others while doing so. I went in due course to a preparatory school, and in 1876, at the age of fourteen, found myself on board the training ship *Worcester*, Captain J. H. Smith, lying off Greenhithe.

In 1877 the Indian Government decided to recruit the Bengal Pilot Service from the training ships *Worcester* and *Conway*, and in that year four cadets were selected from the former vessel and shipped out to Calcutta. In the following year I put my name down for the Service and had the good

fortune to be appointed. I sailed for the *East* on the *P. & O. Peshawur* in September, 1878.

My thanks are due to Mr. H. L. Emmerson, Branch Pilot, who has supplied me with charts and dates, to Mr. F. T. Paine, who has assisted me with old charts and lists of the Service, to Mr. A. J. Gillman, for his account of the *Crofton Hall*, and to Sir Evan Cotton, for extracts from *Bengal Past and Present*. I have drawn upon my old sketch books for most of the illustrations.

M.H.B.

Eastbourne, 1935.

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CHAPTER I

The voyage out—The mouths of the Hooghly—Our chummery in Hastings—The pilot brigs—I join the *Coleroon*—The leadsmen's quarters—"Who's on watch?"—Tommy the mess-boy.

THE steward had a patch over one eye and several strips of plaster on his forehead. He was still under the influence of the previous night's debauch. He showed Alexander (one of the *Conway* boys) and me to a four-berth cabin and hiccoughed that the other two berths would be occupied presently by two men bound for Australia.

So my voyage to the East began. I was sixteen years of age and had no cares in the world, so I was not particularly distressed at leaving my native land. The knowledge that I was "on my own," the novelty and interest of my new surroundings, swamped all other considerations.

After a hearty meal I proceeded to enjoy unrestricted tobacco, which made me sick and promptly brought on my first attack of *mal-de-mer*. For twenty-four hours I lay in my bunk, tired of life and unable even to enjoy the fight which took place between the two Australians. In climbing to his perch the man of the top berth trod on the face of the man in the lower bunk, who immediately bit the offending foot. So they fought lustily, until the one-eyed steward appeared and persuaded them to desist.

By the time we reached Gibraltar health and appetite were again normal, and I began to enjoy life thoroughly. At Malta the dissipated steward impressed on me that the right thing to do was to buy cigars there. He said the brand to purchase was called "Punch." I bought a box,

which he eagerly inspected on my return from shore, then declared that he "would like to catch a hold of the man what done this on you." He said that only their bands hailed from Havana, the rest of them resembling the inside of a decayed cabbage. The steward was very disappointed. He took the box away and promised to dispose of them for me.

We stayed several hours at Suez and some of us rode on donkeys up the long causeway to the town. The assistant purser, who was of the party, was a tall thin man, and he was riding a beast which had the amusing habit of suddenly stopping. Whenever the donkey stopped, the assistant purser shot over its head and landed on his own. This happened several times and everybody, except the assistant purser, thought it very funny.

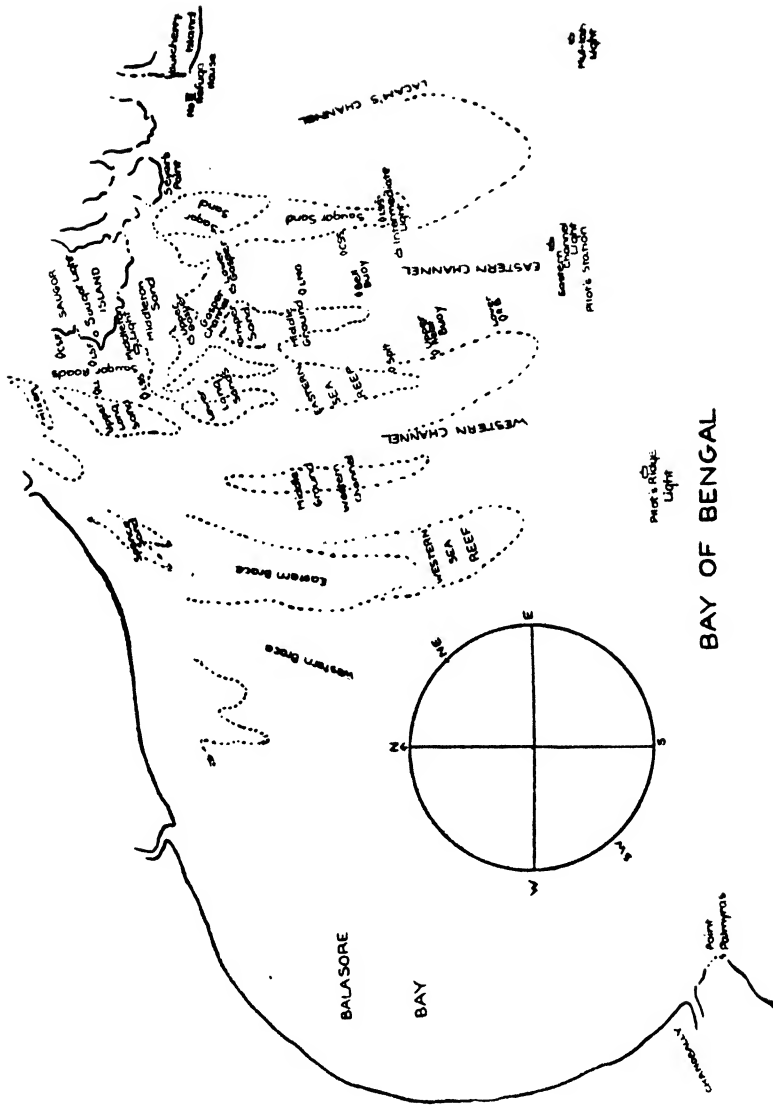
At Madras the steward told us that the Hooghly pilot had come on board. We looked at him with a great deal of interest. He was Mr. W. H. Lindquist, special pilot to the P. & O., and we knew him afterwards as one of the smartest pilots on the river. At that time he used to board the incoming P. & O. steamers at Madras, take them up the Hooghly, and wait in Calcutta for the next outgoing boat.

From Madras we proceeded to the Sandheads at the mouth of the Hooghly and made our first acquaintance with the Eastern Channel Light vessel. Two brigs were lying at anchor near the Light. They were the pilot brigs which were to be our homes for a good many years to come. We anchored and waited for the next tide.

That night we ducked one of the passengers in his bath. He had made himself rather a nuisance, one way and another. So we ducked him.

Before I can proceed with my narrative I must digress a little to give some account of the Hooghly River and its channels. For throughout this book I shall have to refer constantly to places and channels, and without some knowledge of the river the reader will be as much "at sea" as I

Pat's Ridge
Light



was on that October evening in 1878 when the *P. & O. Peshawur* dropped her anchor near the Eastern Channel Light.

A glance at the chart will give some idea of the Sandheads at the mouth of the Hooghly. The chart shows only that portion of the head of the Bay of Bengal which lies between False Point and the Mutlah lightship. With the eastern side of the head of the Bay, extending from the Eastern Channel Light some two hundred miles to the Arakan coast, this narrative is not concerned, but a map of India will show the numerous mouths and creeks which compose the Gangetic Delta, through which, of course, the water of the Ganges pours into the Bay of Bengal.

Seventy miles to the westward of the Eastern Channel Light is situated Point Palmyras, where the river Dhamra has its exit. Fifteen miles up the Dhamra is the town of Chandbally, between which and Calcutta there was a large Indian passenger traffic. North of Point Palmyras the Orissa coastline sweeps round in a big curve, forming Balasore Bay.

Forty-six miles east of Point Palmyras is the Pilot's Ridge Light, anchored in twenty-six fathoms. This Light marks a long bank of very distinctive soundings of sand and broken shells, which in the days of sail was an infallible guide to the Pilot Station at the mouth of the Hooghly.

Steering east-north-east from the Ridge Light one finds the Eastern Channel Light at a distance of twenty-four miles. The water round Balasore Bay is shallow for a distance of seven or eight miles from the beach, and all round the mouth of the Hooghly are long ridges of sand which stretch down towards the Bay of Bengal.

The Hooghly is the westernmost of the numerous mouths of the Ganges. Calcutta is situated about eighty-one miles above Saugor Island, which is the first land one passes on the way up. But below Saugor there is a stretch of about forty miles of pilotage water between the sands formed by the silt brought down by the river.

I have read somewhere that an amount of silt equal to the bulk of the great Pyramid is deposited, on an average, every twenty-four hours, by the various mouths of the Ganges collectively. Whether this is so or not, there is no question that a lot of silt comes down, especially during the freshets in July, August and September, and the sands are continually being extended into the Bay of Bengal.

After leaving the Eastern Channel Light one proceeds up the Eastern Channel on a northerly course for about 26 miles to the Lower Gasper Light, when the course alters to north-west through the Gasper Channel, and this used to be a teaser when proceeding up under sail if the wind came to the westward of south-west, especially on the flood tide which set across the channel. I have seen as many as twenty-six vessels beating about at the Sandheads during a westerly gale, unable to get in until the wind hauled to the southward.

From the Upper Gasper Light at the head of the Gasper Channel the course was northerly again into Saugor Roads ; the first anchorage.

From Saugor the channel lies between sandbanks until land appears to the westward, a clump of trees and a building at Kedgerree. From there onwards we are between river banks which gradually contract as we pass through Kulpee Roads and Diamond Harbour anchorage, and reach Hooghly Point, where the river makes a bend to the right, at the well-known James and Mary crossing. Thence to Calcutta the river is comparatively narrow.

Next morning we got under way again and proceeded up the river. I was mostly impressed by the extreme flatness of the surrounding country and the dirtiness of the water. The native boats were of shapes to which I was unaccustomed, and there seemed to be a lot of birds of all kinds about.

At Garden Reach the King of Oudh's Palace was pointed out to me. Posted on different parts of the buildings were men armed with long bamboos who were keeping great

flights of pigeons continually on the move. At each end of the river front were cages which held tigers ; and there were peacocks which made themselves heard from time to time.

The port was full of shipping, a veritable forest of masts ; some of the finest vessels in the world were moored four abreast all the way up Calcutta Reach. There had been a famine in Orissa in 1877, and vessels had swarmed to Calcutta from all parts of the world, laden with rice and grain. But they had not found it so easy to get a cargo to take them away again ; and there they were. Some of them had been lying in the port for nearly a year.

As the ebb made down we steamed up to the jetties, and we wondered whether anyone would come to meet us. They did. An elderly pilot, Mr. Lambrick, and his leadsmen C. E. Scott, a small man with an unusually large nose. We found afterwards that he was known as Nosey Scott and that he was quite an interesting character. He said that he would take us all to the leadsmen's chummery for the night and that we should report next morning to the Port Officer.

The leadsmen's chummery at that time was situated in Hastings, a suburb of Calcutta, near Tolley's Nullah, a small tributary of the Hooghly. I was told later that Tolley's Nullah had originally been the main stream and that the very sacred temple of Kali Ghât was situated on it.

The chummery was a comfortable bungalow inhabited by the youngsters who had joined from the training ships in the previous year, when the Government had decided to recruit the Service from those vessels. Prior to that the Service had been recruited in all sorts of ways. Under the Honourable East India Company the appointments lay with the Directors, who gave them to the sons of their friends. Later, boys were chosen from the Bluecoat School and from Greenwich. And at one time when there was a shortage of pilots a large number of men were brought in apparently haphazard, some sailors, and some not. But the river

always had its own method of selection and would weed out those who were unfit for the work.

I was told later on by some of the older men that the Service was originally started in the middle of the seventeenth century by five Cinque Port pilots who were sent out by the East India Company to survey and chart the channels at the mouth of the river. The best remembered of them was one John Heron, who came out in 1668. He wrote a book of sailing directions for the Hooghly, and charted the river.

To return to the evening of our arrival. Most of the leadsmen were away, either down the river or on the brigs, but we were hospitably received by those in residence, and I was glad to meet one or two of my old shipmates of the *Worcester*. They appeared to be living very comfortably. A well-cooked dinner and the *khitmagars* in snowy costumes created a favourable first impression. I began to have visions of becoming a nabob.

We were eager for information as to what lay before us in our new calling, and plied the old hands with questions about everything. They told us we should each be attached to one or other of the brigs, which were three in number, the *Chinsurah*, *Cassandra* and *Coleroon*, giving us at the same time a few particulars about the peculiarities of their respective commanders. From these we gathered that life would be a bit strenuous for those appointed to the *Coleroon*, the Branch Pilot commanding her being rather a martinet.

It appeared that two brigs were always at the Sandheads attending to the inward and outward bound traffic, whilst the third would be in town refitting at the Government Dockyard at Kidderpur. The duration of stay for each vessel at the Sandheads was normally three months, and in town one month or more.

After being instructed in our duties as leadsmen we should be sent to heave the lead under the orders of one of the pilots. The pilots, we learnt, differed considerably in

their ideas as to how leadsmen should be treated. Some of them were kindly souls who allowed the leadsmen to take life easily ; others kept him heaving the lead all the time, merely calling him in for meals. Our shipmates expressed themselves very strongly about one old Branch Pilot in particular, and rather made our youthful flesh creep.

The chummery could only accommodate one of us permanently and they chose Mason, the other *Worcester* boy, but they put us all up for the night in the beds of the men who were away down the river. Next morning we were presented to the Port Officer, Captain F. Warden, who said he would send us all to the Sandheads on the following day. Quarters were found for Cox, Alexander and me with Captain Beresford, who commanded the Government steamer *Undaunted*. He gave us part of the top flat of his house.

We got orders that evening to proceed to the Sandheads next morning in the *Undaunted*. We found her lying at the swinging buoy off Kidderpur, a white paddle steamer with two yellow funnels. She left on the last quarter-ebb and proceeded down through Garden Reach, where three large sailing vessels were taking in tow, heaving up their anchors and getting ready to turn.

I may mention here that the time of departure for laden vessels from Garden Reach was governed by Moyapur Bar, situated about fifteen miles below Calcutta. A laden vessel would turn and proceed down in time to meet the incoming flood-tide above Moyapur, and would cross the bar as soon as she had sufficient water. Six inches or a foot would be considered sufficient, as the bar was surveyed every day by the *serang* in charge of the tidal semaphore at Moyapur, and one could rely on the reports. After crossing the bar a deep-draughted vessel would have to go her best pace in order to cross the bar at the James and Mary shoal before the tide fell.

Needless to say, all this was not known to me then. I only knew that it was breakfast time and that the little fish called ' topsi mutch ' were uncommonly good. At break-

fast we made the acquaintance of Mr. W. Symons, Master Pilot, who was going down passenger to the Sandheads to await his turn there. He was a smallish man with black whiskers and a keen sense of humour. He also had a great store of anecdotes. On the way down the river he pointed out various objects of interest. At Fisherman's Point anchorage he drew our attention to the green wreck buoy which marked the spot where the S.S. *Queen Anne* had grounded and capsized, drowning some of the passengers, who were trapped in their cabins; and farther down the



R. C. RUTHERFORD

river below Mud Point he showed us the mast of the *Cawdor Castle* still visible. She had capsized when turning to come to an anchor.

I forget whether we got to the Sandheads that day or whether we anchored at Saugor and went out the next day, but I know we arrived in daylight and were transferred to the brig *Coleroon* commanded by Mr. R. C. Rutherford, Branch Pilot.

The *Coleroon* was a stout-built little vessel of about 300 tons, she was what was termed composite built, *i.e.*, steel frame with scantling of teak. The weak point of vessels of that kind was that the frame was apt to wear out before the teak, and they did not last so well as vessels built entirely of teak.

The leadsmen's quarters were in the forward 'tweendecks,

divided from the after 'tweendecks, where the pilots slung their cots, by a bulkhead. Right aft, on the starboard side, was the captain's cabin, and on the port side the doctor's cabin. The crew, who numbered about thirty-three, lived in the forepeak. They were mostly lascars from Chittagong, and were very good seamen and boatmen.

On the quarter deck, sitting about on the settees smoking, and chatting, were seven or eight pilots. They were mostly



SEATED ON HIS COT

big men, and I liked the look of them. I liked the look of the brig. I liked everything.

We were lying at anchor, a leadsman on watch. When his two hours were up he suggested that someone should relieve him. Nobody appeared anxious to do so, so he went below to talk about it, and that's where the trouble began; for Mr. Rutherford at that moment called out, "Who's on watch?" and as nobody answered he called us all on deck and ordered the lot to proceed to the mastheads and remain there. I shinned up to the foretopmast cross-trees with three others, and the remaining four went up

aft, and there we stuck for about an hour, rocked in the cradle of the deep, as the old song so beautifully puts it, until we were called down from aloft and the heinousness of the crime of leaving the deck without being relieved fully explained to us.

Leadsman carried a small sea chest made of teak, and a bag containing bedding of some sort. Pilots, in addition to a chest and a bag, carried a swinging cot, laced up in a canvas cover, and each pilot had his Indian servant. All this baggage sometimes caused comment when boarding an inward-bound vessel; but as a pilot might have to remain for weeks at the Sandheads awaiting his turn, he required a good supply of clothing. The swinging cot made a good night's rest possible and was really more a necessity than a luxury. In the south-west monsoon the brigs were pretty lively, and it's not much fun shooting about all over the place when trying to get some much-needed sleep. Leadsman slept on their mess table, on the benches by the table, or on the deck, and slept very well, too.

Mr. Jennings, the mate of the *Coleroon*, in the course of the next week broke me in to harness, as it were; taught me how the lead should be hove and the soundings called on the Hooghly. It was never swung overhead, and one never said, "By the deep." He taught me the names of the spars, sails, and rigging in Hindustani; also the orders for tacking and wearing in the same language, the boat orders, and the orders about the maroon or torch which had to be shown at regular intervals at night on the forecastle head. And then, when I was able to box the compass in the vernacular, he decided that my education for the time being was complete and reported to the captain that I was now fit to start my career as a leadsman.

But before leaving the *Coleroon* to heave my first lead up the river, I must not forget to make mention of a remarkable person on whom the comfort of the leadsman in the 'tweendecks largely depended, and that was Tommy the mess-boy of the *Coleroon*.

He stood about four feet six inches, was very muscular and active, and was always smiling. He was of Portuguese extraction and like so many Portuguese Eurasians was much darker than the average lascar. His was no light task, for he had to wait, single-handed, on the leadsmen and look after them, and they might number as many as seven or eight. If a leadsmen arrived on the brig during the night Tommy had to receive him, stow his baggage away, and make up his bed on the deck, the table, or a settee. With a departing leadsmen, his was the task of



TOMMY THE MESS-BOY

rolling up his bedding, packing up his gear, and making sure that he took all his things away with him.

His first job in the morning was to bring coffee to his youthful charges. He would then roll up their bedding and stow it away in their bags, bring hot water for shaving, find basins for them to wash in, and help them generally. His next task was to lay the breakfast table, bring the food from the galley, wait on them, and afterwards clear away and tidy up. Throughout the day he was perpetually in request, and always willing and cheery. I really think that he was one of the most efficient people I have ever met.

Later on he fell upon evil times and I was told that he had had the bad luck to choose a wife who knocked him about. One of the Branch Pilots took him into his service as ship's boy and dressed him as a page with a row of buttons down his chest ; but he had lost his cheery smile.

CHAPTER II

I heave my first lead—The “*Nixeratizzle*”—The men of the tugs—Difficulties of turning in the river—Gratuities—Payment of pilots—Mr. Law and the French barque—Death and resurrection of M. Renelaud—Leadsmen’s duties—Life on the brigs—Rice pudding—Vulture as “turkey”—The Frenchman’s pig.

I HOVE my first lead up the river in a steamer called the *Venice*, with Mr. Rayner, Master Pilot. He was a small, dark man, very self-collected and undisturbed under all circumstances. This characteristic I found subsequently



MR. F. T. RAYNER

pretty general amongst the men in the Service ; I was very much impressed by it and decided that I must try to cultivate a similar repose of manner. I had been told what to do, and after measuring and marking the steamer’s lead line, reported to Mr. Rayner that the lead line was ready. He kept me heaving it at intervals all the way up. On arrival at Calcutta I went to my new abode where I found Cox, who had been appointed to the brig in town, the *Cassandra*, commanded by an ex-Branch Pilot Mr. Baldwin, who, I think, had left the Service as the result of an accident but had been taken on again to command one of the brigs.

The brigs were commanded by the Branch Pilots, twelve in number, who took it in turn to go in command for a year at a time. The pay was a thousand rupees a month ; this of course, was very much less than they could earn on the river, and the command was not very popular. Any Branch Pilot who found the work on the river too strenuous had no difficulty in getting command of one of the brigs, and could generally remain in command for as long as he chose to stay there.

After a couple of days in town I received orders to heave the lead down in a sailing vessel, the *Knight of the Thistle*, under the orders of Mr. Reddie. Captain Beresford advised me to go on board overnight ; so after dinner I drove in a *gharry*, or cab, to the nearest *ghât*, and engaged a dinghy to take me to the vessel. My knowledge of the language was practically nil and the dinghy *wallah's* English not up to much. He did not know where the vessel was lying, and we went up and down the tiers of shipping lying moored four abreast, occasionally hailing to enquire if the vessel's name was *Knight of the Thistle*, the dinghy *wallah* pronouncing it ' Nizeratizzle.' It was a fine clear night, the stars shining brightly, and the water covered with the little lights on the native boats.

After an hour or so of fruitless search we all felt a bit tired, and by mutual consent, or tacit agreement, tied up at one of the *ghâts* and went to sleep. At least the dinghy *wallahs* went to sleep, but I spent the night killing mosquitoes.

It must have been about 8 a.m. when I dropped off, and it was probably about half-past four or five o'clock when the *manji*, or head dinghy *wallah*, woke me up and directed my attention to a large sailing vessel out in the stream, dropping down past Kidderpur and just visible in the early morning light. He said, " Nizeratizzle," and I agreed. We made for her and found she really was the *Knight of the Thistle*, dropping down below the moorings before taking in tow.

The vessel was in charge of one of the Assistant Harbour

Masters, but Mr. Reddie was on board and seemed amused at my account of how I had spent the night. He evidently thought that I was not very intelligent, but did not rub it in, and told his boy to get me a cup of coffee which I was very glad to have.

The *Knight of the Thistle* was a handsome vessel with painted ports. As usual with a vessel leaving port everything looked untidy and dirty, and there was a sickly, frowsy smell, probably from the jute cargo. The Assistant Harbour Master was on the forecastle head, the crew at the windlass, looking, as always when leaving port, very much the worse for wear, many of them still under the influence of the cheap spirit with which they had been doped in the boarding-houses, and all pretty sorry for themselves.

Every now and then the Harbour Master would give the order to veer away a little chain until the anchor began to grip, when he would shout to the second mate on the break of the poop to put the helm over, and the ship would sheer across the tide until she had reached the desired position, when a fathom or two of chain would be hove in, and with the anchor just touching the ground we dropped down between the college sand buoys and the moorings, until we arrived off the Botanical Gardens, where we brought up with a short scope of chain and Mr. Reddie took over charge from the Harbour Master.

The tug now came ahead to take us in tow. Mr. Reddie went on the forecastle to pass hawsers, telling me to remain on the poop and pass his orders to the man at the wheel.

The tug had anchored about half a ship's-length ahead, and we proceeded to haul his two hawsers aboard. They were very heavy coir hawsers attached to lengths of steel hawser. We hauled the ends of the steel hawsers aboard through the hawsepipes and made fast to the bitts on either side of the deck abaft the forecastle.

The anchor was then hove up and catted. We dropped close in alongside the northern bank while the tug put her helm over and drifted broadside to the stream. We then

put our helm over, followed her round, turned head down, and proceeded down the river. Mr. Reddie sent the crew to breakfast and came aft to watch the steering.

I may say here that it was always a nice bit of work turning to proceed down, whether in a sailing vessel in tow or in a steamer. The tide ran down more strongly in the middle of the river than at the sides and was quite slack close in to the northern bank. Taking advantage of this fact a vessel started to turn always from the slack with very little way on. As her nose came out into the stream, so she commenced to turn head down. If she started to turn with too much way on, she would shoot across the stream too rapidly, and in the case of a sailing vessel the tug had to hold and check her, and keep her off the southern bank. The men in command of the tugs were extraordinarily good at the job. Cullum, who commanded the *Court Hey*, Hamer, Sampson, Heath, Hand and Stone were all experts, whose work was appreciated and admired by the pilots.

It was not only in turning the vessels in Garden Reach that skill and care on the part of the tug master were required. At the crossings and at one or two points in the upper reaches there were eddies and cross-currents which called for skill and attention if trouble was to be avoided. At such places the pilot went on the forecastle ready to have the hawsers slacked away, or the anchor dropped if necessary.

I cannot recall any occurrence of interest on this trip down the river. We probably anchored at Kulpee for the night, and towed to sea the next day, and Mr. Reddie probably got a hundred rupees' gratuity for getting to sea in two days.

Gratuities were against Government regulations, but at the time I joined they were practically the rule. Vessels which did not pay gratuities were called "Dead nailers." Some vessels gave a gratuity of twenty-five rupees to the leadsman, amongst others the City Line, Brocklebanks, and the Star Line, a line of very comfortable and popular

steamers long since defunct. There were four of them, the *Pleiades*, *Mira*, *Orion*—I forget the fourth. All these paid a gratuity to the leadsman who was fortunate enough to be appointed to them.

I have not mentioned the manner in which the pilots were paid. They received fifty per cent. of the pilotage, which was charged according to the draught of the vessel. A few of the older hands received sixty per cent. For the purpose of leave allowance there was a fixed pay scale. But the income of the pilot was his fifty or sixty per cent. of pilotage, plus any gratuities he might receive. Pilots were appointed by turn, according to grade, to incoming vessels at the Sandheads. There were four grades: Branch, Senior Master, Junior Master, and Mate. But in town a pilot could claim to take down any vessel he had brought up if the vessel applied for him. If he did not want to take her down, and refused the application, she went to the pilot of the turn. As a rule a man could do as much or as little work as he chose. If he was satisfied with a small income he could slack it, and some did so.

Some years previous to my arrival on the scene it had been the rule that any vessel leaving port could apply for any pilot that her captain fancied.

During the Abyssinian war the larger sea-going tugs had been requisitioned for service with transports. There were no tugs left capable of towing a sailing vessel to sea from Saugor against the south-west monsoon, and windjammers had to work out under sail. A certain number of the pilots showed themselves much more skilful at this job than their brethren, and were consequently in great demand. If it happened that several vessels were ready to leave at the same time, there would be keen competition to secure the services of some man of outstanding ability. The vessel which offered the heaviest bag of rupees secured him.

A rather amusing story was told of Mr. Laws, a mate pilot who was once sailing a French barque up the river. He spoke no French, but being a man of resource he made

a chalk drawing on the deck of a barque under full sail, and as he required sail to be taken in on approaching his anchorage, rubbed out first the royals, then the topgallant-sails, and so on, and the sails were taken in accordingly.



POINTED REVERENTLY TO THE SKY

Now, in the Service at that time was a man named Renelaud who spoke French and was always applied for to take the French ships down. The Frenchman asked where Renelaud was. Mr. Laws promptly drew a coffin on the deck, took off his hat, and pointed reverently to the sky. The

Captain hailed the mate and the bos'un and told them the sad news : "*Il est mort, ce pauvre Monsieur Renelaud.*" They sighed in unison. Unfortunately in the upper reaches they met an outward-bound vessel on whose poop stood the great Renelaud himself. His resurrection was greeted with cries of "*Voilà Monsieur Renelaud !*" and Laws was branded with the epithet *menteur*.

Mr. Laws was quite the thinnest man I have ever met. There was nothing of him, and he was weak about the knees ; but he was always cheerful, and always smoking a large Burmah cheroot. He was known affectionately as 'Billy Louse.' One of the leadsmen told me that he was once sent with Laws to board an inward-bound American ship, and as Laws was about to step from the rail to the deck a large dog sprang forward, growling and showing his teeth. The Yankee skipper, after a hurried glance at Laws, yelled out, "Have a care, pilot ; my dog's terribly fond of bones."

I will pass over the next few months, during which I was learning to heave the lead to my own satisfaction and, what was of more importance, to the satisfaction of the pilots I accompanied. I found that, as I had been warned, they did indeed vary very much in the way in which they treated their leadsmen. Some of them kept the leadsmen heaving the lead practically all the time, whilst others allowed him to remain on the poop or the bridge, even told him he could smoke, and generally rather spoil him.

On a sailing vessel it was the leadsmen's duty to see the anchor hove short, report the fact to the pilot, and then return to the forecastle to superintend the passing of hawsers with the tug ; and the heaving up and catting of the anchor. As soon as the vessel was under way he took the lead, and hove it until called in. With constant practice one acquired considerable skill in heaving the lead, and a good leadsmen would give the water to a few inches, even when travelling at speed, calling out, as the water shoaled, "A large quarter," "A small quarter," and "Mark under

water, three or four," as the case might be. If there was over seven fathoms of water one called out "No ground."

After a few months on the river a leadsman would be permitted to look out and pilot the vessel for a short stretch. And I got the shock of my life when suddenly called upon to do this by Mr. Branch Pilot John Taylor when heaving the lead with him in the S.S. *City of Canterbury*. We were turning round to proceed down from Garden Reach and were across the river when Mr. Taylor called me in from the chains and told me to look out while he went below for a few minutes. I was very startled, but before I could say anything, or plead my newness or inexperience, Mr. Taylor had disappeared down the bridge ladder. I looked down the Reach, which was fortunately clear of shipping, and then looked over the side and saw that we had slight headway, so I ordered the engines "Half speed astern" and put the helm amidships. As soon as she began to gather sternway I stopped the engines, put the helm hard a-port, and then went slow ahead, reversing the engines again as soon as she gathered headway. To my relief Mr. Taylor then returned to the bridge, put the engines full-speed astern, tucked her stern well into the slack water on the northern bank, and soon had her head downstream, while I returned to the lead feeling thankful that I had not done any damage.

Mr. W. Symons, who was a passenger in the *Undaunted* when I made my first trip down the river and had pointed out objects of interest on the way down, told me of the consternation he had caused many years before when heaving the lead on one of Green's ships. They were working up-channel in the north-east monsoon and the pilot, having taken charge, went below with the captain to make it "Eight bells" and exchange news, telling Symons, who had been some years in the Service, to "look out for her." They had all sail set and were standing to the north-westward close hauled on the starboard tack.

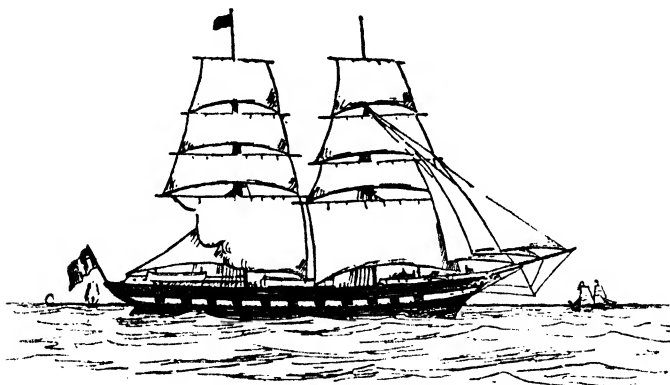
There was a nice little breeze from the north-east, just enough to put a ripple on the water. The passengers, of whom there were quite a number, were seated about on the poop and doubtless congratulating themselves and each other on the fact that the long voyage was nearly over, for it was a long voyage in those good old days, when everything went round the Cape, and took their time over it, too. There was no carrying on all top ropes to make a passage, and at night the ship would be snugged down under easy canvas. They were days of dignified leisure, and long passages. Symons, the leadsman, stood on the weather side of the break of the poop, occasionally calling to the helmsman to keep her close to the wind, and the bearded officer of the watch regarded him curiously and rather superciliously.

When Mr. Symons found that he was nearly in a line of the buoys on the Eastern Sea Reef, he decided that it was time to go on the other tack and shouted at the top of his voice, "Ready about!" The officer looked at him with astonishment. Tacking ship was a serious and important business on a vessel of that class and was usually performed by the captain himself, aided by the piping of the boatswain and his mate. That such a manœuvre should be lightly undertaken by a mere boy no older than their oldest midshipman was unthinkable, and he hurried down to the saloon to acquaint the captain with what was going on. That gentleman was discussing a glass of wine with the pilot, who did not seem at all disturbed by the news, but said, "That's all right; he knows what he's doing," and having finished his glass of wine went on deck, where the men were standing by the braces, and the helmsman pulling the wheel over in obedience to Mr. Symons' cry of "Hard down!" And the pilot stood quietly by and allowed his leadsman to finish staying the vessel, which he did quite successfully as he had often done the same thing before, since like all the other youngsters he was in the habit of tacking and wearing the brigs. The brigs were a

good school in which to train seamen, and I cannot imagine a better.

On the brigs during the day the leadsmen kept watch with the brig's officers, and at night with the pilots, who all had to keep a two hours' watch at night if below the rank of Branch Pilot. Branch Pilots were exempt from watch-keeping.

During the south-west monsoon the brigs always kept under way and cruised south-west of the Eastern Channel



THE BUOY BRIG

Light. The Buoy Brig, as she was called, which received outward-bound pilots, cruised about five miles from the Light. The brig which supplied inward-bound vessels with pilots was called the 'Cruiser,' and cruised seven or eight miles south-west of the Light.

The pilots kept the night watches from 8 p.m. until four in the morning, when the mate came on duty.

The crew kept a lascar watch, *i.e.*, they all turned in until they were wanted, except two hands on the forecastle head, two hands aft, and the *secunny*, or quartermaster, at the wheel. With these five men the brig was handled. In ordinary monsoon weather she would be under easy canvas; topsails, spanker, foretopmast staysail, jib, and possibly the foresail. We were always close hauled. When

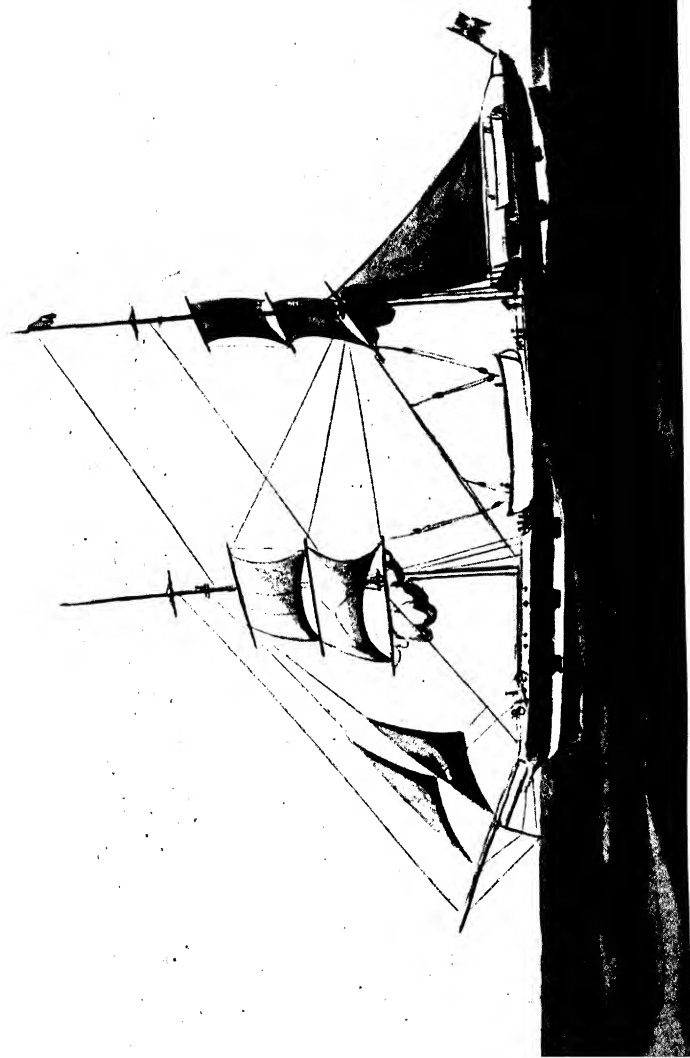
it became necessary from the bearing of the *Light* to go on the other tack, the officer of the watch called his four men together to wear ship. They squared the mainyard, raised the tack of the spanker, put the helm up, and as she came round hauled the head yards round and braced sharp up on the other tack, shifted the head sheets over, braced up the after yards, and hauled down the tack of the spanker. If the foresail was set, it was, of course, clewed up while wearing round, and then set again.

To communicate with an inward or outward bound vessel it was necessary to launch the ten-oared pinnace which rested upon, and was secured to, the sheep-pen forward of the main hatch. All hands were called, the main yard was squared, and yardarm tackles sent up to the lee fore and main yardarms. The boat was lifted off the sheep-pen by tackles on the mainstay; the crew then manned the yardarm tackles and hauled away, at the same time slacking away the stay tackles until the boat was hanging over the water, when all was let go, and she was afloat, ready to be manned and sent away.

This sounds quite simple, but when the brig was rolling heavily, care was necessary in slacking away at the right moment, and any clumsiness on the part of the officer directing the operation might mean the boat landing on the rail and perhaps starting a plank. The boats were built of teak and were very fine sea boats, but heavy to pull.

A leadsman was always sent away in charge of the boat, and the leadsman who had not become a good boatman by the end of his first monsoon had something lacking from his make-up.

In the leadsmen's 'tweendecks we were always a very cheery party. We messed together and were presided over by the second mate. The messing of the brig was in the hands of the Branch Pilot commanding, who might be a person of generous impulses or the reverse. One grumpy old fellow who had retired before I joined, had left behind him a reputation for close-fistedness, and the old hands



PUTTING THE BOAT OUT

would tell how a newly-promoted Mate Pilot, anxious to propitiate the tyrant, had praised the quality of the tea which was served out in the afternoons. "This is most delicious tea, sir. Where do you get it? What is it called?" "My dear young friend," growled the ogre with disconcerting frankness, "I don't know whether it is called Pekoe, Souchong, or Congou. All that I know about it is that it is the cheapest tea I can buy in the bazaar."

Shortly after I joined, it was considered necessary by the second mate of one of the brigs to correct the Portuguese cook, who had served up a particularly repulsive rice pudding which was condemned by us all. The mess-boy was told to call the cook, who, realising that he was not being sent for in any friendly spirit, was very reluctant to come down to the 'tweendecks. The second mate, an old sailor-man and not one of us, sent word that he would come and fetch him if he did not appear at once. When the culprit eventually crawled down the ladder he was made, in spite of tears and protests, to swallow most of the unsavoury mess, the remainder being thrown over him.

In that case the fault lay with the cook, but on another occasion when we considered that we were not being properly fed we decided to complain to the commander, and deputed the thinnest and hungriest-looking leadsmen to carry aft a plateful of fowls' necks which had composed the chicken curry supplied to the leadsmen's mess, with a request that we might be supplied with more substantial fare. The Branch Pilot who happened to be in command was rather a bad-tempered man at the best of times, and he simply boiled over with rage as our envoy timidly stated our case. "Look at him, gentlemen!" he roared to the pilots who were looking silently on, for they were not being too well fed either. "Look at him! He's gorged, that's what he is, gorged!" And that was all we got out of it, except a certain amount of amusement.

But as a rule we were very well fed, and we all got on well together. We had plenty to talk about, and each new

arrival from town had something to tell us about the trip down, the people on the vessel, or the peculiarities of the pilot under whose orders he had been heaving the lead. One leadsman who had just hove the lead up in a French barque amused us with an account of a rather laughable misunderstanding which had occurred between the captain of the vessel and the pilot. As the latter boarded the



“ HE’S GORGED, THAT’S WHAT HE IS ”

barque the captain accosted him eagerly with a question which seemed to puzzle him a good deal. He shook his head and turning to his leadsman said, “ I don’t know what the man means. He keeps saying, ‘ Not a damned blackguard at Saugor.’ ” Neither the pilot nor leadsman could speak French, and as the captain kept repeating the same thing about blackguards at Saugor, they concluded that the poor fellow was slightly mental. So the pilot said soothingly, “ No, no, Monsieur le Capitaine, there are no blackguards at Saugor,” and having reached that anchorage, came to there for the night. On turning out the next morning they found that another French barque had arrived while they had been sleeping, and had come to

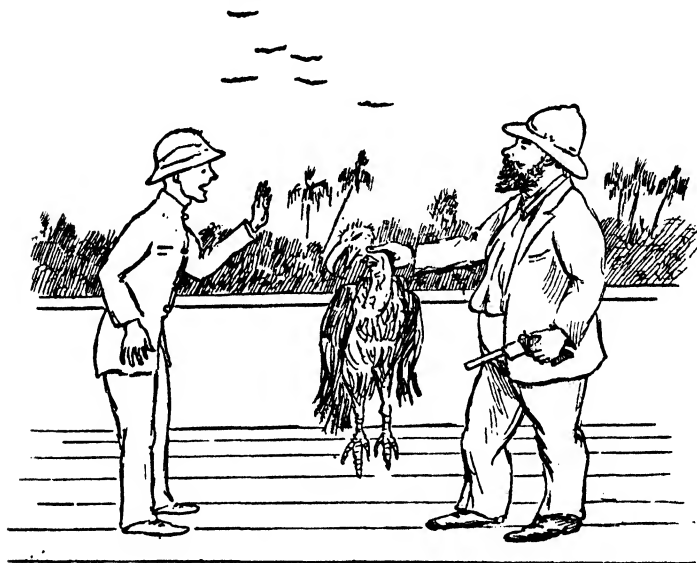
anchor close by. As soon as he saw her the captain cried joyfully, "*Notre Dame la Garde!*" She had been named after the well-known church at Marseilles, and it was about her that the captain had been enquiring. They had both sailed about the same time from Pondicherry and the captain was anxious to know whether he was the first to arrive.

A great deal of what may perhaps be termed the 'folk-lore' of the Service, the yarns which the pilots retailed to the youngsters when in conversational mood, consisted of stories about French vessels. The French may be said to have provided the comic element in the life on the river, for I cannot call to mind any grim or tragic anecdote in connection with them. The ~~tales~~ were generally concerned with the subjects of food and the eccentric tastes of the French. As their vessels usually went up or down the river without steam, the pilot would be several days on board and have ample opportunity of studying their manners and customs.

One pilot related how, when after many days in the north-east monsoon he had managed to work a French barque as far as Hog River Reach where he had anchored to wait for the next flood tide, the captain armed with a revolver went ashore to see if he could shoot anything with which to replenish the larder, as supplies were running low. The pilot, who was not fond of hunting or wildfowling, preferred to remain on board and take it easy. Presently he heard a heavy fusillade at no great distance from the vessel, and shortly afterwards the captain returned on board carrying triumphantly a large bird which he declared was a turkey but which both the eye, and nose, of the pilot pronounced to be a vulture of the most revolting description. It had a red neck like a turkey, but there the resemblance ended. However, the captain was delighted, and handed it over to the cook.

Another story was also of a vessel which was being worked up the river in the north-east monsoon. The pilot had been

on board for over a week and was getting rather tired of the fare, which lacked variety. Forward, just aft of the crew's quarters, in a spacious pen lived a very fine pig, which the pilot could not help admiring—pork in Calcutta was not a thing that one cared about tackling; one could never tell how it had been fed. But this pig was a thing of beauty, lived in a clean sty, and had a bath every morning.



THE TURKEY

The pilot dropped several hints about it. He told the captain how fond he was of pork. He also said that pigs did not do well in Calcutta—they were liable to malaria. Why run the risk of losing it through ill-health, when it was in such prime condition and just ready for the table?

But his hints and suggestions were all wasted on the captain, who said that the pig was one of them, that they were fond of it, and that the men would fret if anything happened to it. He hoped that the pig would complete the voyage and return with them to Bordeaux.

But one morning the pilot heard a lot of squealing, and saw that there was a big commotion in the neighbourhood of the pig pen, where from the excited conversation something important was evidently happening.

At *déjeuner*, which was served at eleven always, he took his seat in the cabin, feeling sure that the meal would consist of pork chops, cooked as only a Frenchman can cook them. He felt glad that they were not under way but lying at anchor waiting for the ebb to finish, and that he would be able to feed in comfort. There is not much comfort in dining on deck with the vessel working through a narrow channel, and having to shout an order to the helmsman between each mouthful. Seated with him at the festive board were the captain and his two officers, and he noted an air of expectancy on their expressive countenances which he thought augured well.

The cabin boy placed a dish containing a large black pudding on the table, and the captain proceeded to carve it into four portions. The pilot, however, declined the tempting delicacy, saying that for his part he would rather wait for the pork chops. The captain seemed surprised, and said that there were no pork chops. "But," said the pilot, "you killed the pig this morning." "Ah, *non*," cried the captain. "We not keel him. *Nous l'avons saigné*." The black pudding was the result of the surgical operation.

I remember being amused at the appearance presented by the captain of a French barque which came close alongside the brig to receive his pilot (and they always came close and handled their little vessels skilfully). This man, who was short and stout, was clad in a tartan pyjama suit and carrying a pink parasol. Another commander wore wooden *sabots* and had painted the right foot green and the left one red, in keeping with the starboard and port navigating lights.

CHAPTER III

Some of the Senior Pilots—Mr. Smyth teaches me a lesson—Mr. Le Patourel and Sam—Mr. R. M. Daly—The pilgrim ship—"I've got to die directly"—Cholera and smallpox—The bargaining doctor—Smoking in the chains.

IN 1878 the three senior Branch Pilots were Mr. C. G. Smyth, Mr. J. B. P. Le Patourel and Mr. Daly. They were all three very skilful pilots, though differing very much in appearance and disposition.

Mr. Smyth was a strongly-built man, with a big chest measurement, small grey moustache, florid complexion and a quiet, dignified manner.

The first time I have the lead with him was in a sailing vessel, whose name I have forgotten, at the beginning of the south-west monsoon. We sailed into Saugor. I had marked the leadline and reported it all ready.

Mr. Smyth said, "I carry a small lead and line in my bag; ask my boy for it."

I very stupidly exclaimed, "Oh, the ship's lead and line are all right for me, sir."

"Very good," said Mr. Smyth. "Then take the lead."

I took it, a thick, clumsy line and very heavy lead. He did not send anyone to help me haul it in, as was the custom, and he let me heave it all the way into Saugor. There was a following sea which made it all the harder to haul in.

He called me in after the anchor was down. I showed him my hands, which were raw and bleeding, and said, "I am afraid I shan't be much use to-morrow, sir." He replied, "No, I don't think you will," and I did not heave the lead the next day. On arriving in town I was granted two or three days' leave to get my hands right. I bought a small lead and line for myself after that. . . .

I hove many more leads with Mr. Smyth and got to like him very much. I remember heaving the lead down with him in one of the Ducal Line of steamers. I think it was the *Duke of Buccleuch*. They were long, narrow steamers with four masts. At Pir Serang crossing we took the ground. There was a strong ebb tide running, and she heeled over until the water seemed very close to my feet. I was heaving the lead from a small grating below the bridge on the port side and did not at all fancy the idea of lying at the bottom of the Hooghly with the steamer on top of me.



MR. LE PATOUREL

However, we pulled over the lump, or whatever it was, and she righted herself. Years after, when I was mate of the brig *Cassandra*, Mr. Smyth, who was taking down one of the Clan steamers, had a stroke and collapsed on the bridge when in the vicinity of Mud Point. The leadsman, Hopkins, a *Conway* boy, brought the vessel to sea, and we managed to get Mr. Smyth on board the *Cassandra*, where he lingered for a day or two and then died, and we buried him at the Sandheads. Two of his sons became pilots on the Hooghly.

Mr. Le Patourel came from Jersey. He was a typical old sea-dog, very broad and sturdy and bull-necked, with a blustering and rapid manner of speaking, very eccentric, but a good man at his work. He had an old lame servant named Sam, and I was told that when Mr. Le Patourel was in command of one of the brigs on which Sam was a *secunny*, or quartermaster, he knocked him down the hatch in a fit

of anger and crippled him, and then took him on as his servant. I have a sketch of Mr. Le Patourel in a grey undervest and pants, with a red flannel cholera belt on. I must have seen him like that when he was dressing, and been struck with his appearance.

Mr. R. M. Daly was a tall, distinguished-looking man, always carefully dressed, and with fine manners. As the result of a shot-gun accident he had lost the second finger of his right hand. The bone had been skilfully removed and the hand very neatly brought together. His eldest son was in the Army and fought at the battle of Tel el Kebir. Another son, Frank, was in the police and became head of the C.I.D. in Bengal.

I have a vivid recollection of heaving the lead with Mr. Daly in the S.S. *Nankin* from Jeddah with returned pilgrims. This was not long after I had joined the Service. We were sent off to board the steamer at night. As we pulled alongside some filth fell into the boat from latrine boxes slung over the ship's side. Mr. Daly went up the rope ladder and I followed him, and as I stepped off the rail, slipped on the slimy deck and nearly fell. Mr. Daly, who had gone on to the bridge, called to me not to let the *secunny*, or quartermaster, come on board with the book, in which it was the custom to note down particulars of vessels supplied with pilots. I took the book from the *secunny*, and having told him to wait on the ladder, proceeded to the bridge where I found Mr. Daly talking to the captain, who was wrapped up in a blanket and seated on a campstool.

Mr. Daly said to me, "I am sorry to have brought you here, for they have smallpox and cholera on board, and I can't send you back to the brig as you might carry infection."

The captain exclaimed, "What are you complaining about? I'm saying nothing, and I've got to die directly."

It appeared that he had accidentally shot himself in the abdomen that afternoon while handling his revolver in his

cabin, but had had the strength of mind to climb on to the bridge and remain at his post, until relieved by the pilot, when he went below to his bunk, where he died the following day.

Mr. Daly, who was a non-smoker, asked me if I smoked, and when I replied in the affirmative he told me to keep on smoking and to keep near him.

The book was filled in, returned to the *secunny*, the boat sent back to the brig, and we proceeded up channel.

As the daylight came in I noticed figures lying about the deck in all directions. Some of them were dead, and were thrown overboard. The decks were very filthy. To the best of my recollection there were some 900 hajjis on board, returning from Jeddah, where they had embarked after completing the pilgrimage to Mecca. I was told that it was the rule for pilgrim ships to supply merely water, and fire for cooking, to the hajjis, who were supposed to come on board with sufficient food of their own to last them during the voyage.

I went down to the saloon for breakfast and found there one or two officers, an engineer, and a big burly man of unprepossessing appearance, who I was told was the doctor who had joined the steamer at Jeddah. After breakfast the doctor asked me if I would like to see a typical case of 'confluent,' and I accompanied him to the lower deck, which was packed with every kind of human misery. The people were all ragged, dirty, and neglected. It would in any case be very difficult to keep a pilgrim ship sweet and clean, but if any attempt had ever been made to wash and clean this particular vessel it had evidently been abandoned in despair, and she was simply a pigsty.

A poor old fellow with a white beard joined his hands and addressed a prayer of some sort to the doctor, who, when I asked him what the old man wanted, said, "Oh, he has stricture, and unless he's tapped pretty soon he'll be dead by the evening." I naturally asked the doctor why he did not tap him at once, and was informed that for all

his appearance of poverty the old man had some rupees hidden amongst his rags, and that unless he parted with them there would be no tapping.

The doctor showed me his star turn of confluent smallpox, and some cholera patients, and I was glad to get on the bridge again, out of the stench and misery, and into the fresh air. I smoked conscientiously and kept close to Mr. Daly as I had been bidden, but took the lead at the Eastern



THE DOCTOR AND THE HAJI

Gut at the James and Mary crossing, keeping my cheroot going and only taking it out to call the soundings. I heard more about this afterwards, for we passed an outward-bound steamer on the Gut whose pilot was a great stickler for discipline. With horror he saw a leadsman heaving the lead and smoking at the same time, and told the ghastly tale to everyone at the Sandheads when he arrived there.

When the *Nankin* got to Garden Reach the Health Officer, a mild-spoken little man, came on board and told us to hoist the yellow flag as we were in quarantine. He said nobody was to leave the vessel. Mr. Daly protested and was told that he might go but that the leadsman and pilot's servant must remain. I told the Health Officer that as soon as he was gone I would swim ashore. He said,

"All right, you may go, too, if you promise to disinfect your things with sulphur." But the poor old servant had to remain until pratique was granted on the following day. If I remember rightly there was quite a lot of smallpox in Calcutta at that time, and it was not worth while making a fuss over a few extra cases coming into the port.

Not very long after this it was my fortune to heave the lead with the Branch Pilot who had been so scandalised by my misconduct in smoking while heaving the lead. We were put on board the S.S. *Shahjehan* together one afternoon at the Sandheads. This was a very pretty little steamer belonging to the Asiatic Steam Navigation Company. She was one of four exactly alike, the three others being the *Shahzada*, *Maharajah* and *Maharani*. They had three masts and a yellow funnel, were always well kept up and looked after, and were more like yachts than cargo steamers. They were employed in the coasting trade.

Mr. W—— was a big man with a proper sense of his own importance, and he soon showed that he had not forgotten the disgraceful incident of the smoking leadsman. After wetting and marking my leadline, which I always did on every vessel which I boarded, because the line was apt to shrink and become incorrect, I went up to Mr. W—— and said, "The leadline is all ready, sir."

He became very angry and said, "You have not saluted me, sir."

I thought I had saluted him, and said so. He seemed to lose all control of himself, told me not to argue, and to consider myself under arrest. There must have been something about me which Mr. W—— found very irritating. I went below and fraternised with the third officer, in whose cabin I spent the afternoon quite pleasantly playing poker. We came to at Saugor for the night, and as soon as the anchor was down Mr. W—— sent for me and said gloomily, "If you don't wish to remain in the Service, send in your resignation. Don't wait to be dismissed!" I saluted in silence, and there the matter ended. I have a good many

leads afterwards with Mr. W—— and had no other unpleasantness, but he had a knack of rubbing people up the wrong way, and getting their backs up. I recollect on board one ship (I think it was the *Loch Eck*) he had a disagreement with the mate while passing hawsers in Garden Reach and insisted that the mate should be put off duty. I can still see the mate's face looking dismally out of the porthole of his cabin as we towed down the river.

CHAPTER IV

My Prussian friend—Sailing ships and steamers—Climate on the Hooghly—The monsoons—The nor'westers—The work of a pilot—Rains and freshets—Saving up for a "bust"—The Eurasian ball—Mrs. Delgado catches a cigar—"Bombing" the crowd.

As I look back across half a century and evoke the spectres of the past, I am faced with a difficulty. Is this narrative to be a record or history of the shipping which used the Hooghly, and of the men who handled that shipping? Or am I to allow the incidents which concerned myself personally to intrude and monopolise the story? This is a question which is not easily resolved. However much I may determine to eliminate the personal factor, the *ego* is still there, always there, and for one mental picture which treats of the happenings to other people there are a dozen which concern myself alone.

I think the happenings on the river, and matters which concern the Service, should be given predominance over all else. I will leave out most of my recollections of the town and of the people I met there, and will merely say that I was a very restless person, that I frequently changed my habitat, and that I met, and studied, a great number of interesting people of every class.

I did not remain long at Captain Beresford's but moved to a boarding-house, No. 5, Chowringhee, kept by a Small Cause Court pleader. I there made friends with a young Prussian from Düsseldorf, who was in the piece goods firm of John Elmore and Co. We moved to another boarding-house in Dhurumtollah where we chummed together, the idea being that I should teach him to speak English correctly. We read Shakespeare, Macaulay, Lord Chesterfield,

George Eliot and other masters of English; from all of whom we both derived benefit. He was an extremely nice man in every way, very abstemious and clean living, his only fault, to my thinking, being that he was very careful in money matters. I thought him parsimonious.

He had been brought up an atheist by an elder sister, but never obtruded his views on the subject. His admiration for the English was great, and he made me observe how wisely the English in Cromwell's time had conducted their revolution in not slaying their aristocracy, the result being that England had a governing class of independent gentlemen who were invaluable as administrators. He left John Elmore's later on and started a firm of his own. I always kept in touch with him and we made a practice of dining together occasionally until his death of consumption in the General Hospital in Calcutta some ten years later.

Now to resume my narrative of the river. In 1878 most of the shipping coming to the port consisted of sailing vessels. There were very few large vessels among them: a ship of fifteen hundred tons was considered a big one. The ships of the City Line were all 999 and a fraction tons and were considered good-sized vessels. Quite a number of little French barques used to trade to Calcutta, and a sprinkling of small Norwegian and Danish vessels. Wooden ships and barques came from the United States and from Newfoundland.

Towards the close of the south-west monsoon came the Arab ships from Jeddah and Muscat. Fine old teak-built vessels with great square sterns and quarter galleries reminiscent of Nelson's day, they all lay moored together above Hastings, and left again while the north-east monsoon was blowing to give them a fair wind home.

Many of the ships coming to the port at that time were built for speed, had fine lines, and were beautiful to behold. The Star Line were very fine ships, especially the *Star of Greece* and *Star of France*. The former had made the record passage out, I think, in seventy-five days, and

carried a gilt cock at the main truck. The British Line, the Empire Line, painted yellow, and the Counties with four masts, were all things of beauty. To show how small the vessels were at that time as compared with those which were built a few years later, I may mention that I can well recollect some of the senior pilots giving it as their opinion that ships of over eighteen hundred tons ought always to be handled by two tugs, one tug not being sufficient for such monsters.

Amongst vessels which steered badly when in tow were two of Bates's ships, the *Aphrodite* and *The Bates's Family*. I remember the pilot who had brought the *Aphrodite* down on one occasion giving a blood-curdling account of the way in which the vessel had behaved in sheering about all over the channel in a mad endeavour to wreck herself, which, of course, was only frustrated by extraordinary care and skill on his part.

There were a few sailing vessels trading with Mauritius which carried lascar crews. Amongst them were the *County of Berwick*, a good-looking barque, composite built, the *Night Hawk*, and a wooden barque, the *Shahjehan*, commanded by an old Scotchman named MacGregor who carried his wife with him.

The steamers using the Hooghly at that time were mostly 'liners.' Tramp steamers, or 'ditchers,' as the cargo boats coming east through the Suez Canal were called, were few and far between. The bulk of the shipping lying in the port were sailing vessels, and they filled the moorings from Hastings to Babu Ghat.

The coasting trade was principally in the hands of the British India Company, and the Asiatic S.N. Company was just coming into existence with a few small steamers. The trade with China was carried on by the Apcar and Jardine boats.

From Great Britain, in addition to the P. & O. steamers, came Smith's City Line, the Star Line already mentioned, and the Ducal Line. The Anchor Line had not yet

appeared in Calcutta and there were no German steamers. The Messageries Maritimes ran a small steamer between Calcutta and Ceylon.

For the first few months after my arrival on the Hooghly I found the weather and climate absolutely perfect. Beautiful bright sunny weather, not too warm during the day, and in the evening fine sunset effects, enhanced by the mist rising from the river. The general impression of peace and quiet was increased rather than diminished by the far-off sound of a conch or a tom-tom from the villages as we passed through the upper reaches on our way to Garden Reach after a long day's work.

This lasted until the middle of March, when things began to warm up. The north-east monsoon came to an end officially on March 15th. By April, the south-west wind had commenced to blow at the head of the Bay of Bengal, becoming stronger and extending farther south as the month wore on.

Then came the nor'westers. My first experience of a nor'wester was at the Sandheads. The two brigs were under way, cruising south-west of the Light under easy sail. It had been blowing fresh from the south-west all day, but towards sunset the wind dropped, and I noticed a bank of cloud to the westward which gradually increased in size and density, and suddenly began to rise, taking the form of a well-defined arch, black and solid-looking, which soon seemed to fill all the sky to the north-westward, while a continual shimmer of lightning played near the horizon. The south-west wind died away, and the order was given to take in and furl the topsails, haul down the headsails and drop the spanker. The men sprang aloft and in a very few minutes everything was snug and we lay with our head to the southward under bare poles.

I watched the lightning playing under the solid black arch, which now extended right overhead. There was perfect stillness for a few minutes, and then a belt of churned-up water came rushing towards us, and with a

prolonged scream the squall hit us. With the helm hard down she came up to the wind and, although under bare poles, lay down to it until the lee rail nearly touched the water. Then came the rain in torrents and, above the howling of the wind, deafening peals of thunder accompanied by dazzling flashes of light. The temperature fell several degrees in a few minutes. The squall only lasted for about a quarter of an hour, and then the wind died away again ; but it rained at intervals for a couple of hours or so, and the lightning continued to play until far into the night. The south-west wind did not return till near dawn.

In some years nor'westers were very prevalent at the beginning of the south-west monsoon. As a rule they would form as the sun went down, look very threatening, and then break up and disperse without any violent squall. After behaving in this manner for several evenings there would come a really stiff nor'wester.

In Calcutta a nor'wester was generally preceded by a violent dust storm, and it was a relief when the rain came to lay the dust and cool things down.

In May the weather got really warm, and in June distinctly hot, and it went on getting hotter until the rains broke. I was kept busy heaving the lead, up and down the river in all sorts of ships and steamers, and when at the Sandheads had to go in charge of the boat, taking pilots out of outward-bound and putting others on board of inward-bound vessels.

There was no monotony in the life, for it was one of perpetual change ; one was continually meeting fresh people, and boarding different craft. On climbing over the rail of some sailing vessel which had perhaps taken three months or more coming out round the Cape from London or Liverpool, and whose rusty paintwork bore witness to the buffeting to which she had been subjected, one would be received at the gangway by the second officer, who would tell off one or two of the crew to get the traps on board. On the poop would be the captain, usually a big stout man,

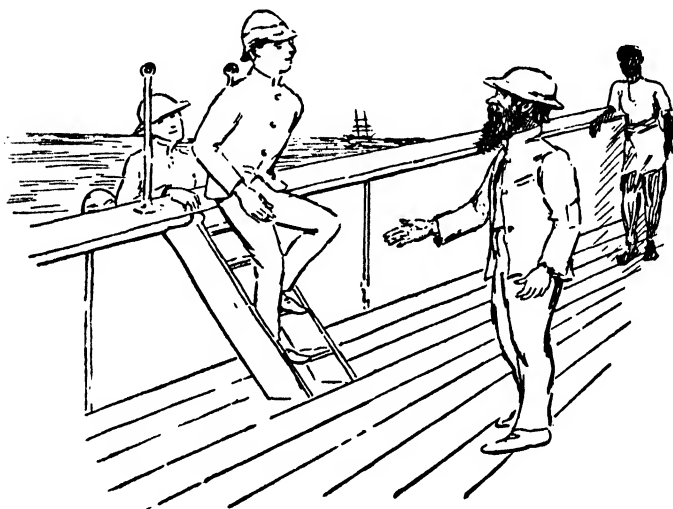
bronzed and weather-beaten, who gave the pilot and his leadsman a warm greeting ; for after the prolonged strain of solitary responsibility and loneliness it was always a relief to hand over the vessel and all its cares to someone else for the time being and to be able to talk freely and find out what the world had been doing while he had been out of touch with events. His first enquiry would probably be about some other vessel which had sailed about the same date as himself. Had she arrived yet ?

The crew always looked the picture of health in spite of poor fare and hard work, or perhaps because of it plus the salt air. They all felt glad at making port and sprang to it as the pilot gave the order, " Lee mainbrace ! " I can recall many such happy pictures. In the dogwatch there would be songs and general rejoicing. We usually sailed into Saugor, where we anchored, and in the case of a laden vessel waited for a tug. If the wind was fair and the tide suited, a vessel in ballast might proceed up under sail. The small fry, French barques and such-like, nearly always did so.

My first year wore on. The rainy season arrived with its usual burst of hard weather, westerly gales and the freshets. The freshets were a new experience. The river became yellow, and there was no flood tide, or very little, in the Upper Reaches, merely slack water until high tide, when the ebb made down at once, and was soon running seven or eight knots an hour. The stream became full of eddies, the crossing at Melancholy Point a whirlpool, and the anchorages no longer havens of rest but sources of anxiety, where two anchors had sometimes to be dropped and a careful watch kept to make sure that the vessel was not dragging her anchors, or that no other craft was drifting down on her.

Towards the end of the rains, in September and October, the climate became very steamy and muggy, and the white residents of Calcutta looked very white indeed, especially the women and children.

Sometimes in the evening in the north-east monsoon, when there were a number of leadsmen on board the brig at the Sandheads, we would get permission to man the gig and go for a pull to the other brig or the lightship. All sorts of sailormen drifted into the Lightship Service. Occasionally a man, tired of the sea and perhaps fed-up with a voyage round the Horn in mid-winter, or some other unpleasantness incidental to the life of the sailor in the good old days, would leave his ship in Calcutta and get taken on



RATHER A ROBINSON CRUSOE

in the lightships, where there was nothing to do but keep watch—a most restful existence.

We were told that there was an officer on the Eastern Channel Light who had been there for a year and refused to go on leave, so one afternoon when we were lying at anchor near the Light we got permission to take the gig and pull over to the Light to have a look at him. We found him quite interesting. He had run a good deal to hair and had rather a Robinson Crusoe appearance with his beard

and lengthy locks. He told us that he had saved up twelve hundred rupees and was going to town on leave, partly to replenish his wardrobe and partly to find a suitable investment for his savings. We wished him luck and pulled back to the brig feeling rather envious of his capacity for amassing wealth. A week or so later we learnt that on arrival in town he had gone on a most tremendous 'bust,' that the carefully-hoarded rupees had swiftly taken to themselves wings, and that he was back again on the Light a sadder, poorer, and possibly wiser, man.

About the same time I made the acquaintance of a youngster who, his apprenticeship having terminated while his ship was laid up in Calcutta, had joined the Lightship Service. He invited me to accompany him one evening to a ball in Bow Bazaar or Dhurumtollah, I forget which, but it was being held in a large hall surrounded by a gallery, and the people were all Eurasians, mostly of Portuguese descent, as I heard such names as Pereira, Gomez, De Cruz, Machado, etc. It is a very extraordinary fact that these people descended from Portuguese ancestors who intermarried with Indians are frequently of darker complexion than the ordinary Bengali. The cooks on the pilot brigs were Portuguese Eurasians, and were darker than the lascars. They were quite good cooks but addicted to the bottle if an opportunity offered. The Lightship man suggested that we should view the brilliant scene from the gallery, as we were smoking, so we went up and made ourselves comfortable in two chairs in the balcony at the end of the hall. The music was quite good, and so was the dancing, and the ladies were dressed in bright colours, red and yellow predominating. Round the hall were seated the chaperons, who as became their age and calling were more massive and dignified than the dancers.

Seated just below us was a stout matron in a very *décolleté* costume. My friend of the Lightship was smoking

a large Burmah cheroot, which he brandished gracefully as he pointed out objects of interest in the hall below. Unfortunately he allowed it to slip from his fingers, and falling it came to rest between the shoulder-blades of the stout lady below. A set of quadrilles was being danced at that moment, and into the midst of this, with a piercing yell, she bounded, causing confusion and bewilderment. There were cries of, "Look at Mrs. Delago! Whatever is she doing?" What she was doing was trying to reach the cause of her distress, with arms which were too short for the purpose, while she sprang about and shouted. I realised that the sooner we were out of the building the better, and dragged the Lightship man with me down the stairs and into the street just in time, for as we hastened away I heard angry voices demanding vengeance for the wrong done to Mrs. Delago. Certainly it would have been difficult to explain away, and this was obviously one of those cases where absence of body was better than any amount of presence of mind.

I never attended any other dance of that description, but recollect about that time being taken to a reception given by a very wealthy Indian who dwelt in the Burra Bazaar district. I forget what it was all about, but it was probably the occasion of a wedding. Champagne was supplied liberally to the guests, and I was surprised to see that our host was distinctly 'under the influence.' He was an important person in the Hindu world, and the street outside the house was packed with beggars, many of them of great sanctity, who had flocked from all parts to partake of his hospitality. When he appeared on the balcony a great roar of welcome went up from the assembled multitude. Normally he was probably a person of kindly and generous instincts, but under the influence of the sparkling wine he developed a wild sense of humour. Gazing on the thickly-packed mob thoughtfully for a moment, he called to his servants to bring him soda-water, a basketful, which, chuckling with merriment, he proceeded to hurl with both

hands amongst the astonished crowd. The bottles burst like bombs, and there was a general *sauve qui peut* to escape from the flying glass. His friends persuaded him to desist and led him away from the balcony, and we also took our departure.

CHAPTER V

I pilot my first ship—Having a “vash”—A crew in evening dress—The ex-missionary pilot—The *Panmure*—“A hell of a night”—Mr. Phipson’s glasses—The grounding of the *Algitha*.

IN October, 1879, four more new leadsmen had arrived from England. The two from the *Worcester*, Shaw and Allen, were old acquaintances. They were both destined to finish their careers in tragic circumstances. And Mason, who joined at the same time as myself, also came to a sudden end. He was a lad of great promise, and although he did not live to become a pilot he had piloted many small vessels up and down the river as a leadsmen before being killed by a falling derrick on board the Anchor Line steamer *Karamania*. I had seen him sailing up in one or two vessels and felt rather envious, but my chance came at last in my second year.

There had been a big rush of arrivals at the Sandheads, and almost all the pilots had been supplied to inward-bounders before I got out, after heaving the lead down with one of the senior men.

We boarded the receiving brig about noon, having left Mud Point that morning, and found that there were no pilots on board the ‘Cruiser,’ and only two left on board the Buoy brig.

Shortly after our arrival the look-out man at the foretop-mast crosstrees called out, “*Jehaj mallum hota, sahib*,” and soon afterwards the officer of the watch picked up a sail to the south-west which turned out to be a topsail schooner, and from the speed with which she became hull up was evidently a fast little vessel. The pilot of the turn looked

gloomily at her through his glass and remarked that it was just like his luck. She was evidently very small, her draught would be about ten feet or so, and the pilotage hardly worth picking up from his point of view.

The officer of the watch called me and said the captain wanted me. I went aft. The captain asked me if I had ever piloted a vessel, and when I said "No," asked me if I would like to have the little schooner. Needless to say I jumped at the offer.

I had felt rather sore, because whilst both Cox and Mason had already been trusted with several small vessels, those in authority had so far shown a very uncomplimentary—and, I thought, unwarranted—lack of confidence in myself. However, my turn had now come. The little schooner hove to astern of us, and I was sent off to her in the boat. She was painted green, her name *Johannah Kremer*, her nationality Danish. The captain, a tall, elderly man, looked curiously at me as I shook hands and told him that I would take charge. I was not eighteen and probably looked younger, being rather small.

After my traps had been hoisted on board and the book written up, I filled away, towed the boat to where she could fetch back to the brig, put the helm up, trimmed the sails, and set the course up-channel.

My hands had got rather grubby climbing on board, so I asked the captain if I could have a wash. He said, "You want a vash?" in a tone of surprise. "Yes," I said; "I want a wash." He looked puzzled and shouted something down the companion, which brought the steward up with something which looked like a milk jug and a slop bowl. With these I washed.

There was a fine breeze and we soon slipped into Saugor, where we anchored for the night. We weighed next morning at about half-flood. With a spanking breeze and a strong flood tide we went flying up and I thought life was well worth living. It must have been about the day of the moon, and perigee spring tides, for I remember quite well

that there was a rise of tide of eighteen feet by the time I sighted the semaphore at Hooghly Point.

I went through the Back of the Hooghly and the Western Gut, so making a fair wind and fair tide of it. As I passed the Waterloo Wreck buoy it was still half-submerged by the strength of the current. We were only drawing about nine feet, and although I knew there was only two feet at low water on the Western Gut I felt pretty safe with a rise of eighteen feet. But I had never seen the marks 'on' in the Western Gut; on the few occasions on which I had been through it I had always been in the chains heaving the lead. I could not for the life of me pick up the marks, and turning to the captain, said, "I can't see the marks."

He dived down below and returned with a bottle of gin and a tumbler, having evidently regarded my remark as a hint.

In the upper reaches, for a while, we were racing one of the City Line of steamers, which, being deep-draughted, had to keep to the channel and go round the bends, whereas with the big rise of tide and our light draught we could take short cuts. In Garden Reach, as the flood was still running, I took in sail, rounded to, dropped anchor, and waited until relieved by one of the Harbour Masters. The amount I received in pilotage did not amount to much but was a very welcome addition to my small income.

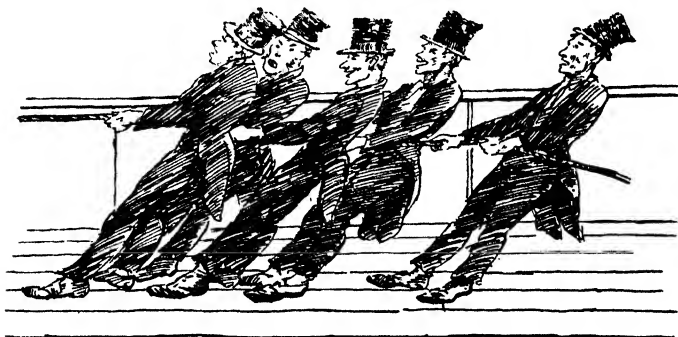
Looking back over my first two years on the river, I recall with amusement being sent on board the ship *Thomasina McLellan* one fine morning in the south-west monsoon to heave the lead under the orders of Mr. F. Ancel, Branch Pilot. As we boarded the vessel we were surprised to see that the crew were all in evening-dress coats and were wearing silk hats. They looked like a troupe of nigger minstrels minus the burnt cork.

Having got our traps on board, sent the boat away, and put the helm up, to stand up-channel, Mr. Ancel gave orders to loose and set the mainsail and royals. As the men ran aloft and lay out on the yards in their fancy dress costumes

the effect was extraordinary. Mr. Ancel, a big man of few words and imperturbable disposition, looked thoughtfully at them, and remarked to the aged captain that he seemed to have a lot of swells on board.

"Yes," said the captain ruefully. "Swells is the word. Those men are all getting ten pounds a month."

The wages for seamen at that time were four pounds a month, but when the time came for the *Thomasina*



ON THE "THOMASINA MCLELLAN"

McLellan to leave Melbourne, the captain was unable to get a crew at anything like the usual figure. Whether the sailormen had all gone away to the goldfields, as sometimes happened, or whatever the reason may have been, there was none to be engaged except at fancy prices. Time was pressing, and there was a good charter waiting for the ship at Calcutta, and something had to be done about it.

The men for once in a way were in the driver's seat and were able to make their own terms, and they fixed them at ten pounds a month, to which the captain had very reluctantly to agree, for there were other ships in the port in the same situation as his. The men, however, feeling that they had struck a good bargain were disposed to do the thing handsomely, so they went in a body to a local dealer in second-hand clothes, and returned on board dressed as

we saw them in tail-coats and tall hats. In these latter they had cut square holes for the sake of coolness and ventilation, and they were not wearing dress shirts, collars or ties ; but the general effect was imposing. The captain, however, was not able to admire the spectacle, which to him was merely a continual reminder of the exorbitant price which he had been compelled by force of circumstances to pay for their services. He admitted that they were an unusually smart crew, and to that extent he was getting value for his money.

We sailed into Saugor, and towed up the following day to Sister Trees in Royapur Reach. The tug was the *Scinde*, Captain Hand, known as ' Bobbery Bob ' Hand.

On turning to proceed up from there on the next day we grounded on the edge of the sand, but after a few minutes the tug managed to pull us off, and we got to Garden Reach. Mr. Ancel told me to write out a report, and I simply stated the bare facts. It was rather a bald document, and he looked dubiously at it before signing. But I do not think that he heard any more about the matter.

I hove the lead with Mr. A. W. Phipson in the ship *Panmure* about the same time. Mr. Phipson was a licensed pilot, a tall elderly man with a grey beard and one eye, which had to be helped with glasses to do its duty. He had entered the Service late in life, when the licensed system had been introduced. Prior to joining he had been a missionary, and had narrowly escaped being eaten by savages, for those were the good old days when the Societies considered it their duty to supply the Polynesians with their favourite delicacy—' long pig.'

Mr. Phipson was not popular at night on board the brig, because he suffered from asthma, and when he got going, there was very little sleep for anyone in the 'tweendecks. Otherwise he was a kindly old gentleman, and I liked heaving the lead with him, because he let the leadsmen go their own way and did not keep them heaving the lead all the time.

It was an afternoon in September when we boarded the *Panmure* between two heavy squalls from the westward. The captain, a big man with a beard, did not seem very pleased to see Mr. Phipson, who, I gathered, had piloted him before and had had some little difficulty with him. Mr. Phipson decided to heave-to on the port tack under easy sail, and see what the weather was going to do, and where the wind was coming from. But the weather did not seem able to make up its mind what to do. The wind came round to south-west for a time, and then we got a squall from west-north-west, after which the wind fell away altogether. About ten o'clock Mr. Phipson very kindly told me to go and turn in, an order which I gladly obeyed and was soon in a state of happy oblivion.

What happened during the night I do not know, but the steward who called me at daybreak, and said the pilot wanted me, gave me to understand that it had been "a hell of a night." I went up on the poop and found the captain and Mr. Phipson having a rather heated discussion as to where we were. It was a wet, gloomy-looking morning, a squall had just passed over, the wind had died away, and the ship was rolling about in a heavy swell. The water was the colour of pea soup. I took the lead and reported four and a half fathoms. Mr. Phipson called me in and asked me if I could make out what the ship was drawing aft. I told him that it might be anything between twenty and twenty-six feet as the vessel rose and fell to the swell. Both he and the captain were wet and had the bloodshot eyes and generally draggled appearance of men who had been up all night in the rain.

They both seemed very ill-tempered and dissatisfied. Mr. Phipson now said that *he* would have a look at the vessel's draught and craned over the stern to see if he could make anything out. Suddenly he cried out that his spectacles had fallen off. The captain expressed his opinion of the catastrophe in very powerful language, and his regret at ever having met Mr. Phipson. I took Mr. Phip-

son's telescope, and the weather having cleared up a little picked up a buoy, which I made out to be the Spit buoy. A light breeze which now sprang up from the south-west gave us steerage way. We put the helm up and got back into the channel near the Bell buoy. After this Fortune was kinder to us. Mr. Phipson went below for a wash, and I looked out until we reached the Gasper channel, when he came on deck again. But I had to do duty as eyes for him and tell him where everything was. We anchored at Saugor where we engaged a tug, and towed up the following day without any untoward incident.

Before leaving Mr. Phipson I recall a bad grounding which he had at Melancholy Point crossing. This occurred during my second year, and during the freshets. I was then living at No. 5, Chowringhee with two other leadsmen, and one of them, F. T. Paine, received orders to heave the lead down with Mr. Phipson in a steamer called the *Algitha*. When he departed after dinner to join the vessel, I said, "We shall meet on the brig, for I am bound to be sent off to-morrow."

On the following afternoon he suddenly reappeared, looking rather travel-stained and sorry for himself. The *Algitha* had left early in the morning and had grounded on Melancholy Sand, which she took broadside on. Paine was heaving the lead on the starboard side, and as she went gently over he was almost submerged. Fortunately for him she did not roll right over at once, but rolled back again for a moment, and he was able to climb in hurriedly from the chains. She then rolled right over and remained with her port side horizontal with the water. All hands scrambled on to it, and hung on as well as they could. Luckily there were a number of fishing boats on the spot, and as there was some danger of the boilers blowing up, everybody climbed into these boats and left the vessel. It was expected that when the flood tide made she would roll back and capsize in the hole which had been scoured out by the ebb rushing past her. What actually happened,

however, was that on the flood she floated and rode to her anchors, which had been let go before she grounded.

Before this took place, Paine was sent off in one of the fishing boats by Mr. Phipson, with orders to make his way to Calcutta and procure tugs. He had to walk all the way and reached the Port Office at eleven o'clock, where his appearance clad in a pair of mud-stained trousers and a vest nearly gave the Port Officer, Captain Stiffe, a fit.

I believe the *Algitha* was none the worse for her little adventure.

CHAPTER VI

A pack of hounds and how *not* to breed them—A strange story of the Mutiny—Women in command—The leadsman abducted—Mr. Rivett tastes the river—Changes in the channels—Difficult places—The ship in command of herself—A near shave—Mr. Mills and his popularity—The mate of the *Shahjehan*.

I HAD a rather curious experience on a vessel to which I was sent to heave the lead with Mr. G. M. Anderson, Master Pilot. She was a deep-laden barque from London, and had been a long time on the voyage, five months or more. As we pulled alongside we were greeted by a tremendous din of barking, and as we climbed on board found the deck covered with foxhounds of all sizes, many of them puppies just able to crawl. The captain, a stout, cheery old fellow, explained that they were a consignment to an indigo planter in the Mofussil. He told us proudly that whereas there were only forty hounds when the voyage commenced, they now numbered more than double that number. They had been allowed to breed indiscriminately. Mr. Anderson looked rather grave and told him that foxhounds were not bred in that haphazard manner and that the pairing of the hounds in a pack was a matter of serious and careful consideration. The captain laughed cheerily and said that the *consignée* was at all events getting good value, and that what the pack might lack in quality was made up for by quantity.

Mr. Anderson told me a strange story of an incident which occurred to him when he was a leadsman. During the Mutiny in '57, troops which were on the way to China were deflected to India, other troops which were due to return to England had been retained out East, and

altogether the trooping arrangements generally had been quite disorganised, causing hardship to many of the units.

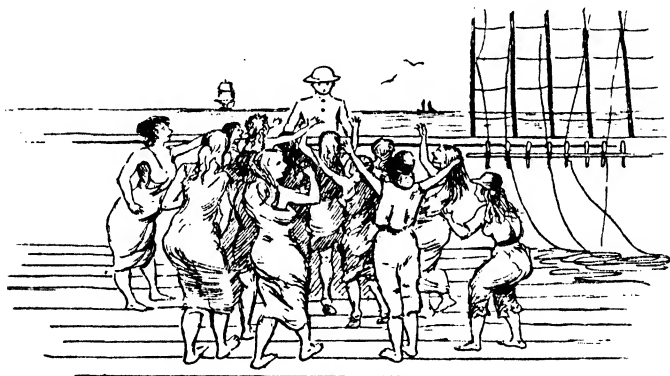
The Government decided that it would be a good thing to send some of the wives out to join the husbands who were being kept in India beyond the time when they ought to have been repatriated. Mr. Anderson could not say whether a vessel was chartered for the purpose, but it was arranged to send quite a number of the women out in a sailing ship round the Cape. As a matter of fact, of course, everything went to India round the Cape at that time. The voyage was a most disastrous one in every way. The ship was dismasted in a hurricane in the South Atlantic, and very nearly lost. They managed to rig up jury masts, and with great difficulty contrived to reach Buenos Ayres, where the vessel was re-sparred and, after considerable delay, continued her voyage. The women had been a source of trouble and anxiety, and were quite out of hand when the voyage recommenced.

Their troubles, however, were not over. The ship was becalmed for many days, and afterwards encountered adverse winds off the Cape which caused further delay, and the best part of a year had elapsed since she left the English Channel before she at last reached the mouth of the Hooghly.

I am not quite certain of the name of the pilot whom Mr. Anderson accompanied as leadsman, but I think it was Mr. Ben Rivett, who climbed over the rail and was allowed to proceed unmolested to the poop to take charge from the captain, who was overjoyed to greet him. But it was a different matter for the leadsman. As Mr. Anderson's head rose above the rail he was greeted with a roar of welcome from a mob of wild women in every state of ragged dishevelment. The poor creatures had long since worn out such few articles of dress as they possessed when they started on their unfortunate voyage, and were clad in strips of canvas, odd bits of bunting, and such articles of male attire as they had been able to get from the crew or the

captain's slop chest. As Mr. Anderson stepped on deck he was seized by half a dozen lusty women, and in spite of his struggles was borne by the yelling and laughing crowd to the fore-castle, where he was rescued with difficulty by some of the men, who had to use a certain amount of violence to set him free.

The women were completely in charge of the ship. They did just as they chose, lived in the fore-castle with the men, and many of them were about to become mothers. On



THE LADY PASSENGERS

arrival at Calcutta, the husbands who came on board to receive them refused to take delivery and marched ashore again. I asked Mr. Anderson what happened to the women. He said he believed that most of them were repatriated and that others simply disappeared.

I never met Mr. Ben Rivett, who had retired before I joined the Service, but have often heard him referred to as a pilot of outstanding skill and ability. He must also have been a rather humorous old gentlemen, to judge from the following story. The brig had been blown off the station by westerly weather and was making her way back when she fell in with one of Green's ships inward-bound, and Mr.

Rivett was sent off to her. The captain was not sure of his position, and asked Mr. Rivett where they were. That gentleman gravely requested that a bucket of water should be drawn up from alongside, and having tasted the contents, unhesitatingly set a course which soon brought them within sight of the Eastern Channel Light, to the wonder of the passengers who were greatly impressed by his ability to locate his position by merely tasting the water. As a matter of fact, before leaving the brig Mr. Rivett had heard the look-out man in the brig's foretopmast crosstrees hail the deck and give the position of the Light.

Mr. Anderson had a fund of information about the Service, and many anecdotes to relate of the doings of men he had known in bygone days, when vessels had to find their way up and down the river under sail and unaided by tug steamers. I gathered that the Rankafullah Channel had been a very tricky bit of navigation, and especially so during the two or three years before it was finally closed to navigation and the Bellary Channel opened instead.

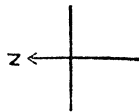
The channels of the Hooghly are always changing. Every year certain seasonal changes invariably take place in the reaches above Diamond Harbour. In the first half of the year, when the flood tides are stronger than the ebb, the tails of the sands wash away, and the heads extend upwards. When the rainy season comes, in the middle of the year, and the freshets commence, the greater strength of the ebb tide causes the heads of the sands to wash away and the tails to extend down the river. These are the seasonal changes, but apart from them the position of the channel in the upper reaches remains fairly constant.

It is not so, however, with the stretch of water from Kulpee to Saugor. Here the channel appears to have wandered about all over the place, being sometimes close to the western bank, sometimes close to the eastern, and at one time nearly in the centre of the river between Kulpee and Mud Point.

I have an old chart of 'The rich Kingdom of Bengall,'

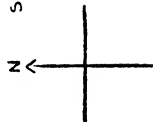
as shown in

of the 17th century



showing the

RANKAFULLA CHANNEL



by John Thornton, Hydrographer at the England, Scotland, and Ireland, in the Minorities, London. It has no date, but appears in the 1708 edition of *The English Pilot*. Some idea of its age is given by the absence of a lighthouse on Saugor Island and by the presence of Cock's Island, a favourite halting-place of the early navigators which has long since disappeared. Calcutta is not marked on it, but in the place where that city of more than a million inhabitants now stands occurs the name 'Kitherpore.'

From Mud Point to Kulpee this chart shows a navigable channel on either side of the river, the one most used being apparently that which ran close to the eastern bank. I think we may assume this because in the channel to the westward there are patches where no soundings are marked.

Comparing this chart of Thornton's with 'A sketch Map of the Hooghly River, compiled from the latest surveys of Mr. Bedford, late River Surveyor, and drawn on transfer paper by Benjamin Bensley, Pilot Service, on November 10th, 1854,' one finds that the two navigable channels on either side of the river above Mud Point have entirely disappeared. To the westward, where the Bellary Channel is now situated, is nothing but sand; the channel on the eastern side has gone, and the passage lies through the Rankafullah Channel almost in the centre of the river.

This Rankafullah Channel had been closed long before I joined the Service, but from the tales told by Mr. Anderson and other old hands, it must have been a difficult place to navigate under sail. There was a bar at either end of it, and only one or two places in the channel where a vessel of any draught could anchor with safety. A ship working out under sail against the south-west wind would have to wait until high water slack before getting under way, and would then have to tack down the Rankafullah to the lower bar, hoping to arrive there with sufficient water showing at the semaphore to warrant the pilot going over it. If the wind was light, or if his vessel was slow and not weatherly, he would not get there in time and would be compelled

reluctantly to put his helm up and run back to the anchorage from which he had started. This might go on for days, until perhaps after repeated efforts he would get a favourable slant of wind and manage to pass the obstruction.

There was a most extraordinary tale of what happened to a small wooden ship in the Rankafullah Channel, which I have heard told several times by the old-stagers.

This vessel had worked down to the lower bar but had been unable to cross it, and the pilot had tried to run back to the anchorage. Unfortunately the wind fell light ; the ship was unable to stem the tide, and commenced to drift back towards the bar. There was nothing for it but to drop the anchor where they were, and hope that the wind would freshen and carry them to safety before the tide fell ; for after the last quarter-ebb there would not be enough water to float her where she was lying. The sails remained set and the crew stood by to heave away as soon as she looked like stemming the tide. But their luck was out, the wind died right away, and the pilot watching the semaphore through his glass, and noting the rate at which the tide was falling, knew that it was only a question of another hour at most before the vessel would take the ground and, with the strong current which was rushing past them, probably capsize. The boats were put out and all hands got into them, holding on alongside the ship to see what would happen. As she got near the bottom she began to yaw about, and when her heel took the ground, for she was loaded several inches by the stern, she took a violent sheer across the channel and capsized, going completely over, keel uppermost. Before this happened the boats managed to get away and pulled for the eastern bank of the river, where they waited for the flood to make and carry them to Diamond Harbour. Looking back the crew could see nothing of their ship, which had entirely disappeared.

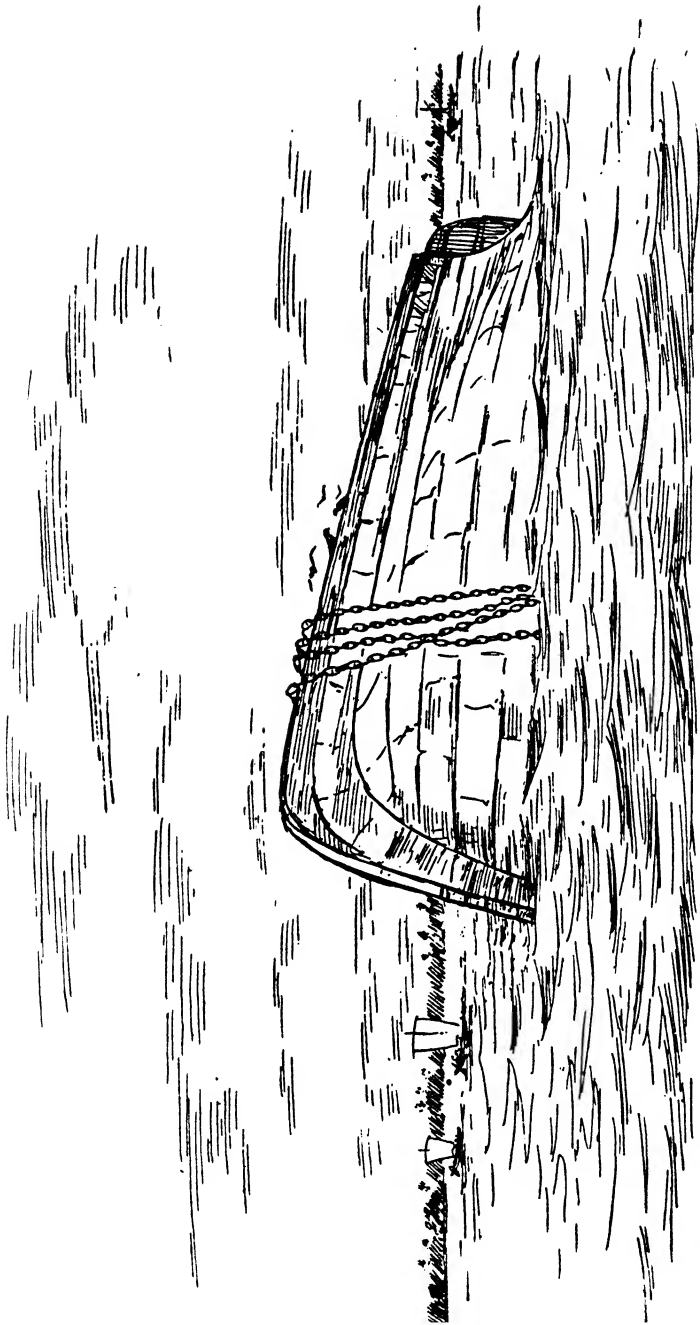
There was nothing very remarkable about all this, for it might have happened to any vessel, but the strange part

of the story is what happened subsequently. The ship rolled over and over, winding the cable round her hull until she pulled the anchor out of the ground, when she proceeded to drift keel uppermost until she arrived at Kulpee Roads.

This having been reported in Calcutta, the owners sent a party down to Kulpee to see whether anything could be done in the way of salvage. But on reaching the place they could see nothing of the vessel, which had drifted with the ebb tide back again into the Rankafullah, and again become submerged. A day or two afterwards, however, she reappeared at Kulpee, and this time she was right side up, her deck almost level with the water, and the cable wound round and round her. The salvage party managed to beach her, pump her out, and remove most of her cargo. She was taken up to Calcutta, fitted with new spars, and sailed for many years after in the 'country service,' *i.e.*, round the coast, to Mauritius, or the Dutch East Indies.

This reads like a fairy tale, but I have no doubt that it occurred, for I have often heard it referred to by the men who were in the Service when I joined. When I mentioned to a retired Bengal Pilot that I was writing a book about the Hooghly, he said at once, "Don't forget that ship which was lost in the Rankafullah, and came to life again." Neither he nor I could recall the name of the vessel, or of the pilot, and other members of the Service to whom I have written are unable to supply them, although they recollect hearing the tale as I have related it.

When proceeding down with a ship in tow of a tug, there were several spots which called for especial vigilance and care on the part of the tug master and the pilot. The first of these was at the crossing at Melancholy Point. They spelt it Munikhali on the charts, but we always called it Melancholy, and a good many people had reason for so calling it. The place was awkward on a strong ebb tide because the current ran swiftly from Sankraal Reach through the centre of the crossing to Jarmakers causing an eddy to form on either side of the stream.



THE TRAVELLING WRECK

The line of eddy was quite distinct and noticeable. If the ship took the crossing at a bad angle and got her nose into the slack, it was very difficult for the tug to keep her from running up the bank, and as a matter of fact that was what happened to a good many vessels.

Another place which required to be taken carefully was Fultah Point when going down against the flood tide, which swept past the Point into mid-river, causing an eddy slack to form just above the Point. With a ship in tow passing from this eddy slack into the strong flood, the tug entered the flood while the ship was still in the slack, and the tug would be swept away on the vessel's starboard bow and be more a hindrance than a help to the ship as the latter passed from the slack to the strong current in her turn. The endeavour of the tug master, always, was to keep on the ship's port bow, and prevent her from sheering to the westward as her bow entered the strong rush of tide. Above the Point to the westward was situated Fultah Sand and that was the danger, as many vessels have found in days gone by. I had an experience of a mix-up at this place when heaving the lead down in the ship *Oneida* with Mr. C. S. Mills, Master Pilot.

We were in tow of the *Hunsdon*, Captain Sampson. As we approached Fultah Point I went into the chains and took the lead. Mr. Mills, as was usual, went on the forecastle with the mate to stand-by the hawsers and anchors, in case anything went wrong. As the *Hunsdon* entered the strong rush of tide outside the slack she sheered to the westward, refusing to answer her helm, and the next moment she was broad on our starboard bow. She was a paddle-steamer, one of Gladstone Wylie's boats, and was towing with her two coir hawsers, which came through two pipes situated abaft the paddle-boxes on either side and were kept in position by guys at the stern.

The tug slacked away her starboard hawser, and answering her helm came back with a rush under our jibboom, our dolphin striker fouling her after awning, and bringing it

down. She was now on our port bow heading the tide, while we were pointing across the river and in danger of grounding on Fultah Sand, with the probability of capsizing if we did so.

My soundings showed that we were already perilously close to the edge of the sand. I glanced at the poop where the captain and his wife were standing, unaware of the peril which was all too evident to me, and I called to the captain to give one of the lifebuoys to the lady. The situation looked pretty hopeless, but the tug was now in a position to check our sheer and to hold us, and was fortunately able to do so. The ship straightened up until she was heading the tide, and after a few minutes of suspense the tug gathered headway and slowly pulled us to safety. But it was a close shave.

Fortunately close shaves were soon forgotten, and half an hour later, as I hove the lead across the Gut, the incident of Fultah Point was already a thing of the past, and I do not suppose anyone gave it another thought.

Mr. Mills was a man of middle height, thick-set and broad chested, with red whiskers. He had a brisk and breezy manner which endeared him to the sailormen, with whom he was extraordinarily popular. When taking in tow to proceed up from Saugor on some inward-bound vessel, he would say to the men heaving round at the windlass, "Now, boys, get a move on, twenty-four glasses of grog to the rupee at Calcutta," and they would roar out a glad response in the chorus of their chanty. I recollect on one outward-bound ship that when they were singing the well-known chanty, 'A Yankee ship sailed down the river,' the leader of the chorus extemporised a new verse :

*"And who do you think was pilot of her?
Blow, boys, blow;
Why, Bully Mills, a right good fellow,
Blow, my bully boys, blow."*

and as we left the ship to go on board the brig at the Sandheads the crew leapt into the rigging and gave him three rousing cheers. I have known the men to cheer him on other occasions as he took his departure from their vessel.

Mr. Mills had the reputation of being a very fine swimmer. He happened to be on board the brig when we were run down and nearly sunk by the ship *Maulesden*. Several of our spars came tumbling down, and all was confusion for a few minutes. When the vessels had got clear of one another and we found that we were still afloat, Mr. Mills turned to Sam Bartlett, a junior Master Pilot and a very big, heavy man, and asked him why he had held on to him all the time during the collision, and while the vessels were pounding away at each other. Sam said :

“ I can’t swim a stroke. I know what a fine swimmer you are, and had the brig gone down, I was going to spring on to your back, and save my life.”

Mr. Mills was very indignant, and expressed his opinion of Mr. Sam Bartlett in very forcible language.

I hove the lead down in the country ship *Shahjehan* with Mr. William Wawn, Mate Pilot, in my second year in the Service. It was during the freshets in September. I had gone on board as usual overnight in Garden Reach, and turned out at 3.30 to start unmooring. She carried, like all country ships, a lascar crew, and the mate was a short, thick-set man, who told me that he had just joined the vessel. We veered away about ten fathoms of chain on the ebb anchor, picked up the starboard one, and then proceeded to heave in the port chain to fifteen fathoms, after which we sent a couple of lines out to the jibboom end for hauling in the tug’s hawsers when he arrived to take us in tow, and while all this was being done the mate, who seemed to be a sociable creature, discoursed of matters in which he was personally interested.

He had arrived in Calcutta before the mast in a ship which had made the voyage round the Horn in very severe

weather, had taken his discharge on arriving in port, and spent a month in the Sailors' Home. He had a certificate as First Officer, and on hearing that the mate's job on the *Shahjehan* was vacant, put in his application for it. It would be a pleasant change, said he, after rounding the Horn in mid-winter, to stay in the tropics for a bit. He further confided to me that in honour of the new appointment he had invested in a complete outfit from one Nobin



THE MATE OF THE SHAHJEHAN

Dutt, of whom I had probably heard, and promised to show it all to me when we anchored on the way down.

As the daylight came in I became interested in his appearance. He had no ears. They had been cut off close to the head, which gave him a very bullet-headed appearance ; but it struck me that the human head minus the ears looked rather neat and compact. He did not vouchsafe any explanation as to their absence, and naturally I asked no questions about what was possibly a delicate subject.

The tug *Columbus* came ahead, we passed hawsers, turned and proceeded. At Melancholy Point, where the eddies were very bad, we had trouble, took a violent sheer for the bank, and had to slip the hawsers and drop the

anchor, bringing up just in time before running up the bank. We passed hawsers again, hove up, turned and proceeded, arriving at Kulpee without any other mishap, and brought up there for the night.

After the anchor was down my friend the mate asked me into his cabin to inspect the articles of wearing apparel which had been supplied to him by Nobin Dutt. There were shirts with blue anchors all over them, brightly-coloured handkerchiefs, mustard-coloured trousers, and a dark blue cutaway coat, which, as he pointed out, would serve for either day or evening wear. These things had cost money but were worth the outlay, as they would undoubtedly create a very favourable impression on the ladies of Port Louis, whither they were bound. He had visited the Island on a former voyage, and retained a vivid recollection of the attractions of the said ladies. I wanted him to tell me something about that last voyage of his round the Horn, but his mind was too full of the ladies of Mauritius to allow him to talk of any other subject, and I wondered whether his affectionate disposition was responsible for the loss of his ears. He presented me with a 'baccy pouch made from the webbed foot of an albatross, and I wished him a happy time at Port Louis.

CHAPTER VII

Handling the brigs—The captain misses stays—The *Chinsurah*—The *Coleroon*—Painting the figurehead—Improving Mr. Kidd—How to refit—Making a survey—The Ferguson brothers—A westerly gale—Pilot's Ridge—A waterspout—Dinner with a Hindu—Efficient clerks.

WHEN I had completed two years' service I was examined by a board of pilots in seamanship and knowledge of the river, and obtained my certificate as second mate in the Pilot Service. I was then appointed additional second mate of the *Chinsurah*, where Mason was second mate.



BRANCH PILOT J. DYER

The Branch Pilot in command was Mr. James Dyer, a spare-built man, with a fair beard turning grey, a very fine seaman, and always quite cool in all circumstances. He could make the *Chinsurah* do almost anything.

It was a pleasure to watch the way in which the brigs were handled when communicating with one another, which they usually did every morning in order to transfer officers, stores and letters. Soon after daybreak they

would exchange signals showing how many officers they each had on board. The senior commander would then fix a time for communicating. The brig to windward would run down to her consort, heave-to on her weather bow, put the boat out and send it away. She would then put her helm up, run across the other brig's bow and along her lee side, with her foretopsail shaking, put her helm down again, come to the wind, and lie hove-to on the other brig's lee quarter, and wait for her boat to come back. They would manœuvre at close quarters with a heavy sea running and a stiff breeze blowing, but the commanders knew exactly what their vessels could do and had every confidence in themselves.

I was only a month with Mr. Dyer in the *Chinsurah*, and was then transferred to Mr. Rutherford's brig as second mate, but during that month I learnt a good deal. Mr. Dyer made it a rule that the second mates should always go in charge of the boat, on alternate nights. Sometimes the boat would be sent away five or six times in the night, and the second mate whose night it was for duty would have to turn out each time the boat went. Hard weather made no difference to Mr. Dyer, the boat was always sent, and one got used to it.

But I remember one amusing incident. It was dinner-time and I was on watch. We dined at three p.m. on the brigs, breakfast at nine, just the two meals. The mess-table was under the skylight abaft the mainmast. Mr. Dyer called up the skylight, "Go about." Now the brig had been at sea for three months and was very foul. I did not think that she would stay. So I sung out to wear ship and told the *secunny* to put the helm up. Mr. Dyer called out, "No, no ; go about." So I brought her to the wind again and gave the order "Ready about !"—in Hindustani, of course. We were under topsails, topgallantsails and foresail. I put the helm down and, as I expected, she missed stays. I was going to wear round when Mason came on deck and said, "The captain has sent me up to show you

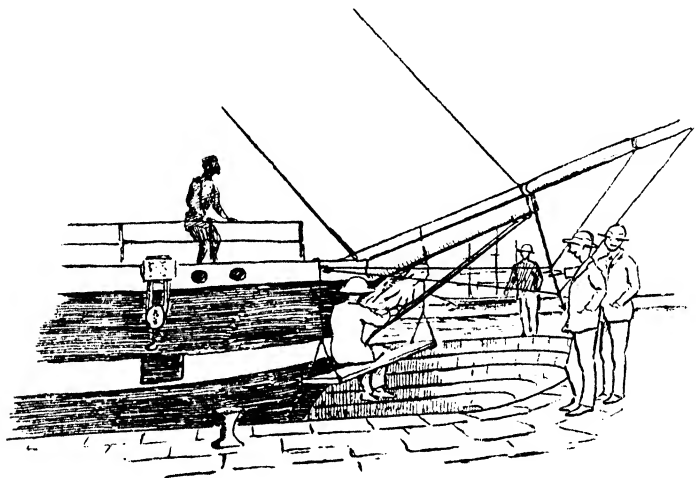
how to stay her." So he had a shot at it, and she missed stays again. Then up came the captain himself and said, "As neither of you two young gentlemen knows how to tack ship, I will show you how it is done." He kept her free a couple of points, checked in the head yards, put the helm down—and missed stays. . . . And I did not laugh. Because I was afraid to.

But all the same he was a wonderful seaman, and if he could not stay her, nobody could. The *Chinsurah* was a tubby little craft, quite round aft with very little overhang, and he would throw her aback, and sail her stern first to pick up the boat if it had difficulty in fetching back.

I recall several incidents which occurred during the eleven months which I served as second mate with Mr. Rutherford, interesting enough to myself but of little interest to anyone else. He was not an easy man to serve under, but was a fine seaman, and I am sure that my time with him did me a lot of good. We did not always see eye to eye, and an instance of this occurred while we were lying in dry dock refitting.

The *Coleroon* had a rather fine figurehead, a well-carved female head and bust, which was always painted white. I decided that it would look better with a good natural complexion, blue eyes and fair hair, and that I could make it a thing of beauty. At that time I rather fancied myself as an artist. I had sent pictures to the Simla exhibition, had even sold one—an Arab *dhow* by moonlight which had been purchased by General Watson—had painted a portrait of Mr. C. S. Mills, Master Pilot, which in my capacity as a Naval Volunteer I had been allowed to send to a Soldiers' Exhibition (I believe it was the only picture there). It was hung over a stall of baby linen and was much admired by Mr. Mills who would visit the stall and gaze at himself as another saw him, a proof at all events that it was not unflattering. These successes had quite convinced me that I was an artist of no ordinary merit, and I set to work with much self-complacency on the figurehead. So cocksure

was I of producing a masterpiece worthy of universal admiration that I omitted the trifling formality of first obtaining the captain's permission, but rigged a stage over the bows and got to work one afternoon with paint-box and palette, imparting what I considered a lifelike appearance of great beauty and attractiveness to the wooden lady. I looked forward with confidence to receiving the thanks and



THE "COLEROON'S" FIGUREHEAD

congratulations of the captain, having no doubt whatever that he would be overwhelmed with wonder and admiration at the marvellous production.

He came on board in the morning over the gangway, and I was all impatience while he looked over some indents and correspondence and asked questions about the work in progress. When he left I accompanied him as he walked round the dock, and was all eagerness to witness the effect of the masterpiece on him. He certainly gave a start of surprise and stood spellbound for a moment ; but not with admiration. His expression betokened rather horror and

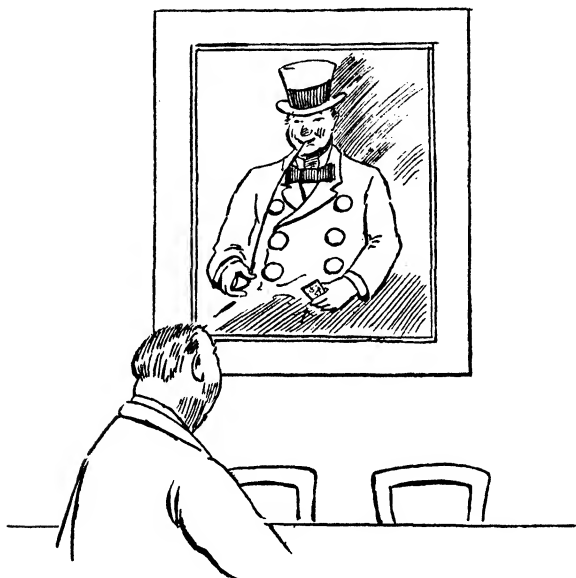
indignation, and in no measured terms he denounced what he called "an unwarrantable outrage." After some caustic references to a certain lady of Babylon mentioned in Scripture he ordered me to remove my colour scheme without any delay, and to restore the figurehead to its original snowy chastity. It was a mortifying experience, not rendered less painful by the unfeeling jibes of the other youngsters attached to the brig, who looked merrily on while I removed the pigment with turpentine and gave the lady a coat of white lead.

It was during that same stay in town that I endeavoured to improve the portrait of Mr. Kidd which hung in what I suppose might be termed the Board Room of the Government Dockyard. It was to Mr. Kidd that the Kidderpore Dockyard, and presumably the suburb of Kidderpore, owed their names. The weather was very hot at the time and the kindly Superintendent of the Dockyard gave us permission to shelter in the large, airy room from the sweltering heat outside. The room was furnished with a long table, numerous chairs, and Mr. Kidd's portrait.

We made full use of the permission, and instead of playing poker on the brig in dry dock, where the mercury was doing its best to come through the top of the thermometer, we played the game in comfort in the long room. Between the games we glanced at the portrait, which seemed to be looking down on us with disapproval. Nobody whom we asked could tell us anything about Mr. Kidd beyond the fact that he was responsible for Kidderpore Dockyard. Whether in life he had been a genial person or the reverse there was no means of knowing, but we decided that he did not look very convivial. It occurred to me that with a few trifling alterations he might be converted into a more jovial companion. With some sheets of white paper, a pair of scissors and a pot of paste, a white top hat was carefully cut out, fixed in the proper place, and embellished with a black band. His frock coat looked more sporting with some large yellow buttons. Some coloured chalks gave him the fine,

fruity complexion of a *bon vivant*, and also induced him to smile. Still he was not quite in harmony with us, for we were all smokers. So a long clay pipe cut out of paper was placed in his right hand while his left held a Bryant and May's matchbox.

He was now one of us. In his new get-up he kept us



THE ALTERED PORTRAIT

cheery company for several days, until the Superintendent, who had probably been informed of the transfiguration by some meddlesome underling, appeared on the scene, expressed strong disapproval of the alteration, and had it all washed off. I am glad to be able to say that the picture was none the worse for the act of vandalism, of which in my maturer years I was not at all proud. But it amused us all at the time.

An interesting ceremony held every time that the brig

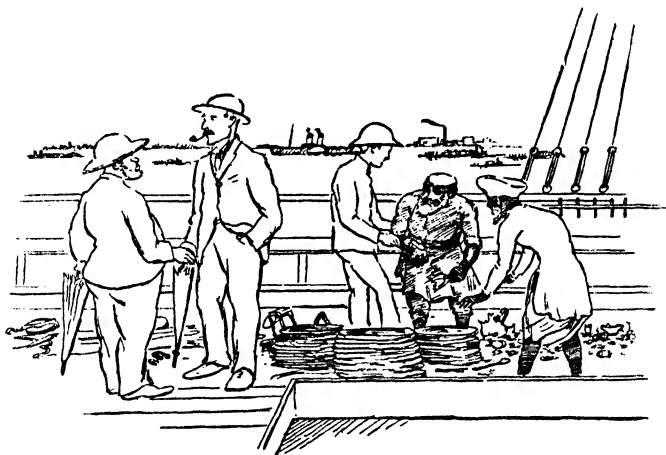
came to town to refit was the survey of damaged stores, old rope, worn-out bunting, etc., which had to be condemned before they could be replaced by new goods issued from the store.

This was a serious business. A list had to be compiled and the worn-out and damaged articles collected for the occasion. Crockery used to suffer a good deal in heavy weather at the Sandheads, for even with the fiddles on the table disaster sometimes overtook the dinner service. A particularly heavy lee roll would send a duck or fowl steeplechasing over the fiddles down the whole length of the table, which was fixed athwartships, and in spite of gallant efforts at harpooning with forks as it flew past the anxious and hungry diners, would land on the deck, possibly accompanied by a dish or one or two plates. On such occasions the glasses were generally grabbed and held tight on account of their precious contents, but a great many of them came to an untimely end during the brig's stay outside. Unless carefully watched the *massalchy*, whose task it was to wash the plates and dishes, would fling the broken fragments overboard, and at the end of the trip when it became necessary to indent for new and exhibit the old, it was sometimes found that two or three dozen new were required, but only four or five cracked and broken specimens could be discovered to serve as exhibits. It was then that the ingenuity of the butler would be put to the test, and a really good butler could break up a plate into a sufficient number of pieces to represent an entire set. It was the same with rope and other articles.

Having made out the list of things which had been damaged or were past service, and completed the indents for replacement 'in lieu,' a day would be fixed for the survey. Venerable coils of rope and old sails would be disinterred from the lazaret. The butler would tastefully arrange fragments of crockery and broken glass on the deck. Tattered flags would be extracted from the signal locker, and the mate would gaze complacently at the heap of

rubbish and await the arrival of the surveyors appointed to tackle the job. On that occasion the surveyors were Captain Beresford of the *Undaunted*, a short, round man with a very large solar topee and a green umbrella, his mate Mr. Jackson, and Mr. Nicholson from the Anchor Hoy, whose task it was to wander about the river looking for lost anchors and laying buoys.

They took themselves very seriously and Captain Beresford was full of importance. The old rope was



THE SURVEYORS

condemned and ordered to be used as junk for making maroons, *i.e.*, torches which were shown at night every quarter of an hour by the brigs when at the Sandheads. Actually the old rope went below again to reappear for condemnation at the next survey in three months' time. Some of the mates were regular magpies for accumulating stores and material in excess of what was actually required. Captain Beresford frowned for some time over the old bunting, until a happy thought occurred to him, and it was condemned and ordered to be retained for straining paint. The broken crockery was accepted, not at its face value but

at the value put on it by the butler, condemned, and new to be issued 'in lieu.'

"Where are you now, Mr. Nicholson?" called Captain Beresford to his fellow surveyor, who was looking at things forward.

"I'm in Hell," was the answer, at which Captain Beresford, who was given to piety, looked grave.

But Mr. Nicholson was not referring to the temperature. He meant that he was busy surveying articles listed under the letter L, and was condemning some old lamps.

The survey finished, Mr. Nicholson slaked his thirst with bottled beer, while Captain Beresford, a teetotaler, refused anything stronger than gingerade, and they departed feeling that they had put in a good morning's work. And I suppose for the matter of that so had we.

Anything that required doing to the hull was attended to by Mr. McIvor and the brothers John and James Ferguson, all three elderly Scots carpenters skilled in shipbuilding, who had a staff of Indian *mistrys* under their orders. The brothers Ferguson amused us. Neither of them would ever give a direct answer to a question about the work in hand, each referred us to the other.

"About those sheets of copper under the counter, Mr. Ferguson, are they to be stripped and replaced with new ones?"

"Aye, you must ask ma brither John," would be the reply.

On putting the same question to brother John, the answer would certainly be, "You must ask ma brither James." They were never seen together and were difficult to find if wanted. Mr. McIvor was a tall, spare-built man with a long beard, who always carried an umbrella.

What they found to do was a mystery, for apart from the brigs, the *Undaunted*, and an occasional small Indian Marine steamer such as the *Quangtung*, there were only a river steamer and a couple of flats to look after and keep up. It was a nice, restful place the old Government Dockyard,

with interesting machines which cut pieces out of, or bored holes through, steel plates as though the plates were made of cheese. I found them most fascinating, but they were seldom working.

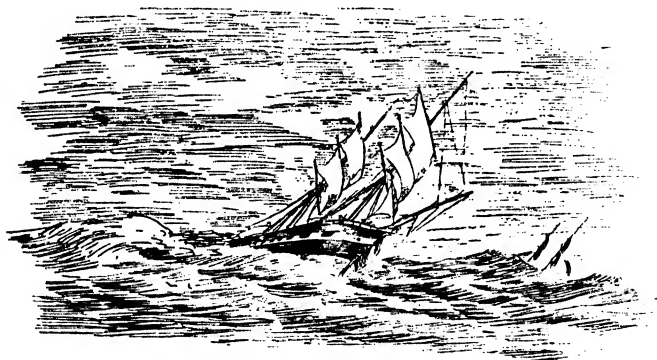
The captain only paid a short visit to the brig in the morning, and when he had gone we amused ourselves in all sorts of ways during the rest of the day. One of our amusements was to lash Billy Bartlett, who was then a very thin leadsman, to the wheel, and the wheel ropes being unrove, spin him. This caused us a great deal of merriment but was rotten for Billy, who took a lot of catching when we wanted to spin him. Later in life he became quite stout and big and it was difficult to realise that he had once been so thin and spinnable.

At one o'clock our servants turned up carrying tiffin tins from our respective lodgings, and we were better situated to get the contents of the tins intact than were the European assistants of the business houses in town, who received their lunch in the same manner. For with them their tins had to run the gauntlet of the loafers, who at that time infested Dalhousie Square and who purchased from the servants the tit-bits of their masters' meals for one or two small copper coins, the unlucky masters getting the residue, neatly rearranged by the deft fingers of the *khitmagars* after the loafers had picked out what they fancied.

During the south-west monsoon we could be certain of getting one or two westerly gales. To-day, of course, such gales will make no difference to the steamers bound for Calcutta. The pilot steamer will be able to supply them with pilots, and the direction of the wind is a matter of no concern. But westerly weather was a serious matter in the days of sail, for it was impossible to get into Saugor with the wind at west, and with a gale from that quarter the brigs were unable to keep on the station, but would stand down south until the wind shifted.

I have a very clear recollection of one such gale, which lasted three days, when I was second mate of the *Coleroon*.

We had supplied several ships and were left with only two Branch Pilots, who were of no use from my point of view as they were exempt from keeping watch at night, which meant that the additional second mate and myself would have to keep the night watches from eight bells in the evening until eight bells in the morning (or four o'clock) when the mate came on deck ; whereas with a plentiful supply of pilots on board to keep watch, we had the night in. In the afternoon the wind, which had been blowing



IN A WESTERLY GALE

hard all day, freshened considerably, and we took a reef in the upper topsails, hauled down the jib and stowed it, and hauled up the tack of the spanker. The sky was a dull leaden colour, reflected in the sea, which was beginning to run big. There was a thin driving rain, which came mixed with salt spray into my face as I stood in the weather gangway getting what shelter I could from the main hatch awning, tented down to the rail on either side. Athwartships, aft of the mainmast, a curtain kept the wet from the quarter deck, which was further protected by the side screens, from the double awnings to the rail. Besides myself and the look-out man on the forecastle head not a soul was to be seen, for the look-out man who was ordinarily

perched on the foretopmast crosstrees had been called down from aloft.

Some two miles away on the weather bow was a barque we had supplied with our last Master Pilot. She was standing down south on the starboard tack like ourselves and had reduced her canvas to lower topsails, fore staysail, and mizen staysail. With every large sea which came along I lost sight of her for a moment. If the sea arrived at us curling over and on the point of breaking, I dodged under the tented-down awning while it struck us and sent a shower of spray whistling away to leeward. No heavy water ever came on board. The brigs were beautiful sea boats and rode like ducks over everything which came along. Every now and then I walked over to the lee gangway and glanced round to see if there was anything in sight in that direction, stood for a moment to watch the smother of foam in which we were wallowing after topping an extra big breaking sea, and then back again to the weather gangway to notice how our wake angled away off our weather quarter. The yards were slightly checked in. There was no question of her running off the wind, for with every surge she came up to it of her own accord, until the weather leech of the maintopsail lifted.

At four the additional second mate relieved me. I pointed out the sailing vessel on the weather bow and the Buoy brig hull down to the north-east, told him that the Eastern Channel Light had not been in sight during my watch, and having written up the deck log went below to lie back until I came on deck again at eight bells to relieve the mate at the end of the second dogwatch.

When I did so I found the brig still standing down on the starboard tack and received orders to keep her so until my watch was nearly up, and then wear round and hand her over to my relief at midnight on the port tack. I was also to keep a good look-out for other craft on the lee bow and not to worry the 'old man' unnecessarily, as we had 'shut up shop' and would not put the boat out for any

vessel. Having said all this the mate retired to sleep until four o'clock when he would come on again, and I lit a pipe, for there was no reason why I should not smoke at night when there was nobody about. The weather kept very much the same ; sometimes it seemed to be blowing a bit harder, with rather more rain, and the wind had got a little to the northward of west. I kept a bright look-out, especially on the lee bow, but there was nothing to be seen, and we might have been the only craft afloat in that part of the world.

Every now and then I hailed the look-out man on the forecastle to keep a good look-out, so as to make sure that he was there and not sheltering in some spot where he could not see anything. At seven bells I turned the hands out and wore round on the port tack, shipping a little water over the weather bow as we came up to the wind, sent the men below again, and handed over to my relief at eight bells. I was not sorry to get out of my oilskins, and after a light repast of a biscuit and a small tot of whisky and water turned in and slept like a log until seven, when the mess-boy called me with a cup of coffee and I got dressed to relieve the mate at eight.

I found that he had put her round on the starboard tack again. There was nothing in sight. The sky and sea were still the same grey colour, it was blowing just as hard. The spanker was down and stowed, and the men were putting an extra gasket round the mainsail which had tried to blow adrift.

At half-past nine the ' additional ' relieved me for breakfast, which the cooks managed to give us as usual, though how they did it was a marvel, for the water was coming in at the hawsepipes and running through the forecastle over their feet all the time that they were cooking. But they did it, and the men got their curry and rice at the appointed time as well.

At eleven we wore round and stood up to the northward again until five o'clock, when we took a cast of the deep-sea

lead. To do this the lead was passed up to the forecastle head, where a man held it with a coil of five or six fathoms of line in his hand. By the fore rigging stood another lascar, also with a coil of line, and the same by the gangway, while the officer of the watch stood aft by the weather rail holding the line. When all was ready, the brig was shaken up into the wind to get the way off her, and when she was fairly dead in the water, the officer shouted to the forecastle to "heave!" The word he actually used was "*dolloh*."

The man on the forecastle having "*dollohed*," shouted a warning to the lascar stationed by the fore rigging, who paid out his coil as the line arrived beneath him, and the same with the man at the gangway, until finally it reached the officer standing aft who let the lead line run through his hands until he felt bottom, or not, as the case might be.

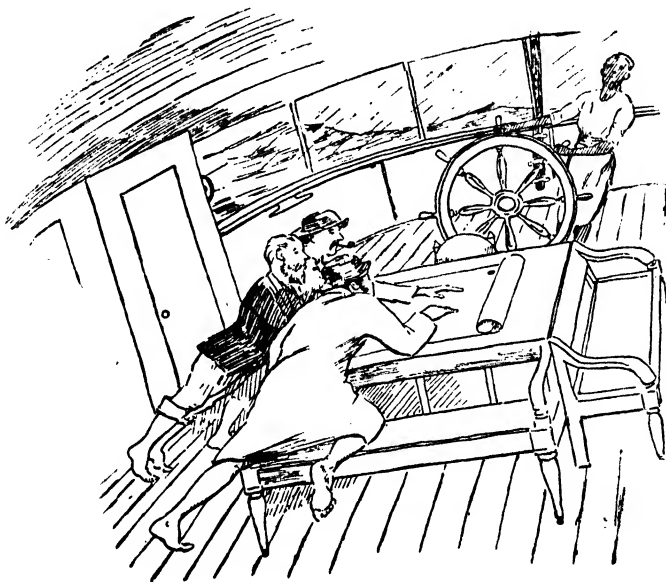
On this occasion we got soundings in thirty fathoms, and the 'arming' of grease at the end of the lead showed black mud.

We stood down south again and continued standing off and on until, on the third day, the gale having blown itself out and the wind come round to south-west, we proceeded to run back from where we were to the station. We knew our position, for the lead had given us thirty fathoms, mud, sand and broken shells, which showed that we were on the Pilot's Ridge and probably nine or ten miles south-south-west of the Ridge Light vessel.

The Pilot's Ridge was a bank which extended for about thirty miles in a north-easterly direction and was an invaluable guide to inward-bound shipping making for the mouth of the Hooghly. The soundings were most distinctive. Sand and shells. All vessels coming up the Bay of Bengal to Calcutta made for the Ridge, and having found it by means of the lead, steered east-north-east until they reached the Sandheads and sighted the pilot brig.

This was the course we were now steering. I was on watch, and the incident now occurred which has impressed that particular westerly gale on my memory. It was about

ten o'clock, the weather had moderated, and we were running under topsails and foresail. The Ridge Light was bearing north, about five miles, and was occasionally obscured by rain. The distance from the Ridge to the Eastern Channel Light being twenty-five miles, and our



FIXING THE POSITION

speed through the water about eight knots, I estimated that we should be back on our station shortly after midnight.

I had been watching the Ridge Light, and keeping a look-out for the reflection of the blue light shown every half-hour by the Eastern Channel Light, so had not paid much attention to what might be going on astern. The *secunny* at the wheel was a good helmsman and keeping the brig well on her course.

But glancing casually aft I was startled to see a dark mass on our weather quarter. It had the appearance of a huge black column reaching to and mingling with the dark clouds overhead. There was no mistake about it, we were being pursued by a very large waterspout, which appeared to be coming right at us. I put my head down the skylight of the after-cabin and called to Mr. Rutherford, who came on deck at once, and we stood looking at the pillar of water which was rapidly approaching. We could now hear the noise made by the sea which was being churned up and whirled round its base.

The summit of the column seemed to be hanging right over us, and it looked as though we were doomed, for had it struck us and dropped the hundreds of tons of water of which it was composed on to our deck, the probability was that none of us would have survived to tell the tale. Mr. Rutherford altered the course to east. There was nothing more to be done, and we just had to wait and hope that the spout would miss us, which it did, but not by much. As it passed across our stern with a roaring sound, the spray from its troubled base fell on us like rain.

We were on the station again when I turned out in the morning, and we had already communicated with two outward-bound vessels. The other brig was in sight to the westward running back to the station, and there were three inward-bounders under easy canvas wanting pilots.

It was during my year as second mate, and while the brig was in Calcutta refitting, that I had the interesting experience of being asked to dinner by a Hindu gentleman, Babu Denoo Nath Mookerjee, who was at that time one of the clerks employed at the Port Office. The Bengal Pilot Service, recruited in England by the Secretary of State for India, was under the Bengal Government and under the orders of the Port Officer of Calcutta, who at the time of my joining was Captain F. Warden who had been an officer of the Indian Navy, a service which had been abolished and replaced by the Indian Marine which was employed

mainly in transport duty. But I found that the administration of the Service was really in the hands of four or five very capable clerks, in the same way (if one may compare small things with great) that England is administered by the Permanent Under-Secretaries and not by the six hundred more or less eloquent gentlemen who sit



BABU DENOO NATH MOOKERJEE

at Westminster. The Chief Clerk was Mr. De Silva, and under him were Babus Mutty Lal Pal, Denoo Nath Mookerjee, and Anoda. The two latter were in charge of the downstairs office, and theirs was the duty of appointing the pilots to vessels leaving port.

I thought Denoo Babu a very pleasant person, and on one occasion was invited to dine with him at his house at

Behala, a village in the outskirts of Calcutta. When I arrived there, I found that his house was quite a good-sized brick building, which he apparently shared with some relatives. My host, being a Hindu of high caste, could not, of course, dine at the same table with me, and a small one had been arranged for my benefit on the first floor landing. The family took their meal seated on the floor of an adjacent room. Through the open door I could watch them feed and could carry on a conversation with Denoo Babu. The dinner consisted of rice, two or three sorts of curry, and condiments in little bowls, and I enjoyed it.

After dinner Denoo played chess with me, and I found that he was an expert at the game, at which I myself was but a poor performer. I then suggested that he should play a game with his son, a young man of about eighteen, while I watched them. To my surprise he looked shocked at the idea, and told me that for a parent to play a game with his child would be all wrong and subversive of discipline. I did not see any of the women and was only introduced to the male members of the family. It was an interesting experience altogether and gave me some slight idea of the difference in customs and mental outlook which existed between the Indians and the Europeans.

Mutty Lal Pal was in charge of the financial side of the Pilot Service establishment and looked after paybills, indents and matters of that kind. Mr. De Silva knew all about rules and regulations, and was an authority on Government Orders. There was a mysterious little old man, whose name I forget, who was in charge of the Wreck Department. I never discovered exactly what he did about wrecks. It certainly was not his job to remove them by blowing them up, for that was the duty of the Royal Engineers, who whenever the channel was hampered by the presence of the unfortunate victim of some mishap would appear on the scene with the requisite explosives and get to work.

Everything ran smoothly with this office staff. They

knew what they had to do and did it efficiently, and with the least possible amount of friction.

The Harbour Master's Department, the Lightships and the River Survey Department were all controlled by the Port Commissioners, who made repeated efforts to get control of the Pilot Service ; but we preferred to remain under the Government. The survey was efficient and kept us well posted as to the changes which occurred in the river. At Moyapore, Hooghly Point, and the north end of the Bellary Channel were tidal semaphores, which were in charge of Serangs whose duty it was to sound over the bars at those places every day and report the soundings by telegraph to Calcutta. These men were very reliable and the pilots always placed implicit confidence in their reports and in the rise and fall of tide which they showed at the semaphores.

CHAPTER VIII

The Sunderbunds—Cyclones—The refuge houses—Loss of Mr. Shaw—The wreck of the *Mohussir*—Beasts in the jungle—A terrible journey—Guarded by a tiger—The rescue of Mr. Ewin and Mr. Allen—A snake at a picnic—Domestic quarrels overhead—Mr. Mackinnon obeys orders.

AFTER completing a year's service as second mate of a brig a leadsman went on the river again for a year. He then passed for mate, and having served a year in that capacity went up for his exam. for Mate Pilot.

I have mentioned the sudden death of Mason on board the *Karamania*, which came as a great shock to me. We had been fellow-cadets on the *Worcester*, had joined the Service together, had always been friends, and I thought a great deal of him.

The loss of Shaw was also a distressing event. It occurred in the Sunderbunds whither he had gone as a guest in one of the steam launches of the River Survey Service.

The Sunderbunds is the name given to the low-lying land, covered with thick jungle and intersected by innumerable creeks, through which the mouths of the Ganges pass to empty their water into the Bay of Bengal. At the time of which I write the Sunderbunds, or at all events that portion of them lying to the westward, of which I had any knowledge, were uninhabited except by deer, tiger, and a few woodcutters.

Cyclones in recent years had swept over them, flooding and drowning everything. I had been told by the captain of a sailing vessel how, after the great storm of 1874, his ship having anchored on the way down at Mud Point

anchorage, the mate had gone ashore in one of the boats and returned with more than a hundredweight of silver ornaments which the boat's crew had collected from the corpses piled up on the eastern bank of the river. On the opposite bank at Kedgeree all had been drowned by the storm wave except the tidal watcher, whose duty it was to show the rise of tide at the semaphore. He had noted and shown high water, and had watched the tide fall a foot or more, when to his astonishment it suddenly began to rise again. This was something so startling to him, such a thing having never before happened in all his experience, that he thought the end of all things had come, and bolted to the nearest tree and climbed it. He was the only person at Kedgeree who escaped drowning.

While on the subject of cyclones, I may mention that years afterwards I met a man on a tramp steamer who had been second mate of a sailing vessel which had been totally dismasted in the Backergunge cyclone of 1876. His vessel drifted up north before the southerly wind which sprang up after the cyclone had passed. On the second day they saw what appeared to be a line of breakers to the northward, but on heaving the deep-sea lead could get no soundings at fifty fathoms. As they approached the apparent line of breakers, they found that it was in reality a long line of floating debris, which had been carried out to sea with the backwash of the receding storm wave which had submerged the Sunderbunds to a depth of twenty feet in places. The broken water, resembling breakers, was caused by myriads of sharks fighting over the corpses and carcasses of cattle, which stretched in a long line as far as the eye could see from east to west. My informant told me that it took hours for the ship to drift clear of the floating mass of corruption and that the captain made the men wear bunting soaked in a strong solution of carbolic acid over their faces as a disinfectant. They drifted into shoal water where they anchored, and were eventually picked up by a tug and towed in.

At intervals along the face of the western part of the Sunderbunds there were, and probably still are, houses of refuge for the benefit of shipwrecked people. These were built on piles and reached by means of a ladder, to protect the temporary residents from wild animals. These refuge houses were regularly visited by the launches of the Survey Service, which replenished their stores of food, water, etc., which were as regularly stolen by the woodcutters. It was on one of these periodical visits that Shaw became a passenger in the launch together with another leadsman, F. L. Puttock. Having inspected the refuge houses the launch anchored in one of the creeks, and Shaw, Puttock, and one of the youngsters of the Survey Service decided to bathe off a spit of sand at the mouth of the creek.

As the tide rose the waves kept washing them off the spit of sand, so they decided to swim across to the other side of the creek, which was more sheltered. The young Survey officer could not swim, and Shaw took him on his back. Half-way across the creek Puttock said, "Let me have him now." So Shaw transferred him to Puttock, who struck out for the beach, leaving Shaw to follow. Suddenly Puttock heard Shaw cry out, and on turning to see what was the matter saw him throw up his arms and disappear. He had been seized by a crocodile. The creeks were full of them. Shaw was very much missed as he was a general favourite. Puttock went down in the *Coleroon* when she was lost with all hands in the cyclone of November, 1891.

During my stay in the Service I can recall one occasion on which a refuge house proved useful, and that was when the *Mohussir* was lost. She was an Arab vessel, barque rigged, and left Calcutta in tow on May 1st, 1882. Besides her crew she carried several Indian passengers, men and women. Mr. Ewin, Mate Pilot, was appointed to take her down the river, and Allen was the leadsman.

When a pilot received an order to take away an Arab vessel he was handed at the same time thirty-two rupees in cash, with which to provide himself with food, it being

taken for granted that he would not care for the diet of the Arabs, or care to feed with them. Sometimes the pilot's idea of laying in provisions was rather peculiar, and I recollect an occasion on which a leadsman arrived at the Sandheads very hungry, and complained bitterly to his brother leadsmen that the pilot with whom he had made the trip down had only laid in a case of gin and a tin of biscuits. But as a rule the pilot would lay in some tinned things, eggs, bread, etc., and live quite comfortably. I hove the lead down once in an Arab where we had a very good round of spiced beef, the remains of which we took to the brig where it was much appreciated; for on the brig we only got chicken, duck, or mutton, all very excellent, of course, and beef was a luxury.

To return to the *Mohussir*. All went well on the first day. She got to Mud Point and anchored there for the night. The next morning they weighed and proceeded down in tow as far as the Intermediate Light, situated midway between the Lower Gasper and Eastern Channel Lights. There Mr. Ewin decided to cast off the tug and work out under sail. The wind was south-westerly. He made sail on the port tack and stood over to the westward until he shoaled on the head of the Eastern Sea Reef, when he wore round on the starboard tack. The flood tide was making and they just held their own, gradually getting over to the eastern side of the channel towards Saugor Sand. In the Eastern Channel the water shoals gradually to the westward, but deepens on the eastern side, on the edge of Saugor Sand, and then shoals quite suddenly. Since casting off the tug the breeze had freshened a good deal.

As Mr. Ewin was considering the advisability of going on the other tack the parral of the maintopsail yard carried away. (This is the band which goes round the mast and keeps the yard in its place.) Mr. Ewin squared the mainyard, put the helm down, hove-to, and sent some of the hands aloft to repair the damage. At the same time his

attention was drawn to the fact that a good deal of water was finding its way below through the forward hatch. With the freshening breeze she had been shipping some water. He went forward to see about it and superintend the proper battening down of the hatch when he suddenly realised that the vessel was going through the water, and on looking aloft saw that the after-sails were full. He ran aft and found that the *nacoda*, or Arab captain, had put the helm up and run her off the wind. Mr. Ewin put the helm



H. V. ALLEN

down and brought her to the wind again, but the mischief was done.

She grounded almost immediately on Saugor Sand, and began to bump heavily. Each succeeding wave picked her up and lifted her farther on to the sand. The tide was still rising and she would float for a while and then start bumping heavily again. She was an old wooden vessel and it was obvious that she would not stand this treatment for long without breaking up. The *nacoda* and crew put the boat out and left the vessel. They offered to take the pilot and leadsman with them, but said there was no room in the boat for the passengers. Mr. Ewin and Allen refused to leave the passengers, and Mr. Ewin's servant elected to remain. The *Mohussir* continued to drift and bump, until they got right across Saugor Sand and into Lacams channel. Mr. Ewin and Allen managed to let go the anchor and she brought up.



THE MOHUSSIR SINKING IN LACAMS CHANNEL

On taking stock of the position they saw that the vessel could not remain afloat much longer. The hammering she had received had started some of her timbers. Several spars had fallen from aloft and the deck was a confused tangle of sails, spars and gear. She seemed to be settling rapidly, and there was no time in which to try to make a raft, so they lashed the passengers to anything which would float, making use of hatches, hen coops, casks, and one or two old lifebuoys which were on the poop, and committed them to the waves. They were busy lashing the servant to a hen coop when the *Mohussir* went down under their feet, taking the boy down with her, as they had not had time to cast off the deck lashings.

They kept themselves afloat on bits of wreckage but there is no doubt that they would have shared the fate of the wretched passengers, none of whom was heard of again alive, had it not been for the roof of the deckhouse, which broke away as the vessel settled, floated to the surface, and served them as a raft. On this, aided by wind and tide, they eventually drifted to the Sunderbunds and landed on Bulchery Island, worn out and suffering intensely from thirst. They decided that their only chance of survival lay in marching to the westward until they reached one of the refuge houses.

On the sea face of the Sunderbunds thick jungle comes down nearly to high-water mark. Swarms of little red crabs are to be seen at times, which when disturbed vanish into their burrows. At certain seasons queer-looking trails lead up from the sea. These are the marks left by turtles which have crawled to above high-water mark to lay their round yellow eggs in holes which they dig with their flippers, leaving them to be hatched by the sun.

The numerous creeks running down to the sea are inhabited by crocodiles, which are said to attain a length of thirty feet and at half-tide may be seen lying on the mud-flats, slithering into the water if disturbed. Curlew and all sorts of waders pick up a living on the mud, and jungle fowl

live in the bushes. Deer are plentiful, and although personally I have only seen spotted deer, cheetal, there are sambhur to the eastward. Tiger are there to live on the deer, pig also are to be found, and large lizards of the iguana kind. But on landing the impression one receives is of loneliness and desolation.

One of the older members of the Service told me how he had once, when on a shooting trip to the Sunderbunds,



UP A CREEK IN THE SUNDERBUNDS

chanced on a creek where, lying half-hidden by vegetation, was the stern of some old ship of long ago, which may have been washed up a century before.

Another tale was of a coolie ship which had been wrecked on the Sunderbunds and how the survivors had made their way along the coast feeding on roots and shellfish until they had been found by a rescue party. At the crossing of the creeks the coolies had been reluctant to swim over for fear of the crocodiles, and the pilot (I think he was Mr. Matson, but am not sure) had always to go first and give them a lead. He was never touched, the crocodiles attacking the last men who swam over.

There are evidences that, in the past, attempts have been made to inhabit this low-lying region of swamp and jungle. At Middleton Point, near Saugor Lighthouse, the foreshore having subsided, the encroachment of the sea in washing the jungle away laid bare the remains of former villages. The brickwork of a well was exposed in one place, and some metal ornaments were picked up. Saugor Lighthouse is surrounded by a high *bund* to protect it from inundations, and by a stockade to keep out wild animals. Or at all events such was the case at the time of which I write.

Mr. Ewin and Allen in their attempt to make their way westward had to traverse several creeks, and as the former was unable to swim, Allen had to swim across with him on his back. No easy job, for Ewin was a big, heavy man and at the first creek lost his head and nearly throttled Allen, who threatened to leave him unless he could control himself and not grip so tightly. They crossed two or three creeks without being attacked by the crocodiles, and at last when they were nearly played out arrived at No. 3 Refuge House situated on Bulchery Island. There they found some water in the tank, a supply of biscuits, and some tinned provisions. Allen's body was nearly raw from exposure to the sun and salt water, and he was glad to rub himself over with the fat from a tin of Australian mutton. The relief of being able to lie down and sleep in security was great, but while sleeping Allen was several times attacked and bitten by rats.

They decided to remain where they were at No. 3 Refuge House, as they did not feel equal to the fatigue of struggling along the coast to the next one to the westward.

Whilst there they were visited several times by a tiger, who came and lay down underneath them, but, of course, could not ascend the ladder which gave access to the hut, and they were inconvenienced by the stench from a dead body, which lay only a few yards away. It was probably one of the unfortunate passengers of the *Mohussir*. Dread of the tiger prevented them going down to bury it.

As soon as the loss of the *Mohussir* became known in town one of the survey launches was sent down to search the refuge houses for any survivors. It was only by great good luck that the two were found, for after visiting Nos. 1 and 2 houses the officer in charge of the launch decided that it was no use going farther east, and was about to abandon the search; but the engineer, Mr. Gomez, a brother of Madame Gomez, the celebrated singer, persuaded the officer to continue the search as far as No. 3, where they found Mr. Ewin and Allen. Years later, when special pilot of the Rangoon Mail steamers, Allen was lost overboard in heavy weather off the Alguada reef.

I chummed for some little time, in a small bungalow at Kidderpur, with Shaw, Allen, and a German named Dreyer who was curator of the Museum and very well informed on all manner of subjects. He had served in the Franco-Prussian War as a lieutenant in one of the Westphalian regiments and had many interesting things to tell us about the campaign. He was a collector of Hymenoptera, commonly known as wasps, and one Sunday I accompanied him on a collecting expedition to the Botanical Gardens.

There were a good many of his little pets about, and he seemed to be doing good business with his butterfly net and killing bottle, when we heard cries of alarm from a nearby thicket. On investigation we found that they arose from a picnic party, which had been disturbed by a snake about four feet long which had started to crawl across their tablecloth. I hit it with my stick, and Dreyer told me to pick it up, as he would like to take it to a *confrère* at the Museum who was interested in Ophidia. While carrying it over my shoulder the reptile, which had only been stunned, became lively and twined itself round my leg. I gave it another whack, which kept it quiet, but it was still alive when we got back home and Dreyer placed it in a box for the night. He had said he thought it a harmless variety or I should not have handled it so cheerfully; but on the following evening he mentioned casually that his friend the Ophidian expert

had pronounced it to be a snake of the most venomous description.

When the chummery at Hastings broke up, Shaw, Allen and I took the ground flat in a large house, and were joined by Mackinnon, another *Worcester* boy who had come out to the Service. On the floor above lived a solicitor and his wife who did not hit it off very well together, and in the top flat lived a gentleman who was a partner in one of the large business firms.

We had not been long installed when we felt called upon to interfere in the affairs of the people who lived just above us. Prolonged screaming proclaimed that something had gone wrong there, so up we trooped in a body to enquire into the disturbance. The wife declared that the husband had hit her. The husband ordered us to clear out, but could not very well tackle the three of us, Shaw especially being a very powerful young man who played forward at Rugby for Calcutta. I pointed out to the others that owing to our youth and inexperience we were obviously unfitted to advise or lecture a married couple, but that the gentleman on the top flat, an old married man, was the proper person to deal with the situation. So we sent a servant up to ask him if he would kindly step down, which he did. We explained the case to him, and asked him to be so good as to tell the husband how he ought to behave in that capacity. The husband's face was an interesting study of stifled and futile rage as the old gentleman told him how wrong it was to strike any woman, especially his partner in life, and when he had finished we told the husband that if he did such a thing again we would send Shaw up to thrash him.

But we doubted afterwards whether the lady was really deserving of much sympathy ; for about a week later, while we were at breakfast, the solicitor appeared in his pyjamas with a request that one of us would lend him a pair of trousers, his wife having hidden all his, and he had an important case on at the High Court in half an hour.

Again we trooped up to his flat and told the lady that she would alienate our sympathy unless she immediately restored the missing garments. She did so with a very ill grace, and we wished them both good morning.

About ten minutes afterwards we were disturbed by a crash in the hall and found that she had got him in the small of the back with a flower-pot containing a croton as he was hurrying downstairs to go to Court. It had bowled him over and the hall was full of mould and broken flower-pot, while over the balustrade leant the lady, laughing like a fiend. We brushed him down, saw him off, and returned to our own quarters impressed with the difficulties and risks of married life.

Mackinnon, who had joined us, turned up one day full of importance. It appeared that a young cousin, MacC——, Chief of the Clan, had just arrived from England, was staying with another cousin, the MacT——, in Calcutta, and was dining with us that evening. The spread would have to be worthy of so important an occasion. As usual we were all more or less stonybroke, but we mustered sufficient cash to purchase a gallon jar of whisky, with which we filled six old whisky bottles bearing diverse labels. These made an imposing show down the centre of the dining-table and we were able to offer the MacC——his choice of a varied selection of Highland dew. The evening was a great success. The various brands were all sampled, and in the small hours we escorted the Chieftain to the residence of his cousin MacT——, round whose bed we ranged ourselves crowing like cocks until, boiling over with rage, he turned us all out, and I have no doubt gave the MacC—— a good dressing down, for he appeared to be a bad-tempered little man.

I recall another incident connected with Mackinnon when he was keeping an anchor watch at the Sandheads. The brig was lying near the Light, riding to the ebb tide, over which a French barque was slowly coming in under sail before a light southerly breeze. The commander of the

brig, Mr. W. O'B. West, was dozing in a long chair on the quarter deck, other pilots were doing the same on the comfortable settees, and everything was hot and peaceful.

When the French barque was about a mile away Mackinnon roused the commander and told him that the vessel was getting close. Annoyed at being disturbed, Mr. West said, "ALL right. Call me when she hits us," and dozed off again.

The barque continued to come along until her jibboom was over the taffrail and knocked the flagstaff away as she put her helm over and ranged alongside the brig's quarter.

As the flagstaff went with a crash, Mackinnon said :

"I think she's got us now, sir."

The commander fell out of his chair, rushed to the rail and told the Frenchman what he thought of him.

All was now confusion and excitement, but there was no damage done except to the flagstaff, and the boat was sent off with a pilot. Mackinnon adopted an attitude of injured innocence and pleaded that he was merely obeying orders. But the commander in a violent outburst characterised him as an idiot of the most sanguinary description.

CHAPTER IX

A cargo of coconuts—The Master Pilots—The Chinese guest—I pass for First Mate—Lascar crews—The two widows—Livestock on board—Collecting marine fauna—The bag net—Stewed anemones—Drinking the specimens—Modelling in mud.

HAVING served my year as second mate and returned to the river again for a year as leadsman, I shortly afterwards had the novel experience of piloting a small Indian brig. As on the occasion when I was given the *Johannah Kremer* to pilot, the station was almost denuded of pilots, there being only one or two of the senior men, who were not at all anxious to board the *Hosalee Dede*.

It was the north-east monsoon, and a small brig had been in sight for a long while, without arousing much interest or anxiety, as she slowly worked her way to the Sandheads; the opinion being that she was what was termed a pariah brig, or native craft, which would find her way to Kedgerree and there pick up a native pilot, who would work her up to Calcutta. There were a good many such vessels at that time, and they appeared, together with the Arab *dhow*s, at the commencement of the north-east monsoon. However, this vessel, the *Hosalee Dede*, hoisted the pilot jack and hove-to close to us. Nobody wanted her, so she was offered to me, and I was quite glad to have a vessel of any sort to handle.

When I boarded her and took charge she was under topsails only. I soon had all sail on her, but found that she was very tender and heeled over quite a lot. I asked them what cargo they had and they told me that she was full of coconuts from Car Nicobar, whither they had gone with Chinese tobacco which they exchanged for coconuts,

and the Rajah had made his subjects do the loading. We worked up to the Intermediate on that tide, but had to take the topgallantsails off her as she leaked badly above the waterline when heeling over. The seams in her upper works were quite open, and the pumps were going all the time. I had no knife or fork and had to use my fingers to eat the curry and rice which the crew lived on, and very good it was, too.

They did all they could to make me comfortable. I slept on deck at night, as I did not fancy the cabin, but woke up feeling rather warm, and found that in their anxiety lest I should catch cold or get a chill they had piled all sorts of dubious-looking cloths and rugs on me. We worked into Saugor on the second day, the pumps going all the time. After we had anchored I made a sketch of the captain and, as they seemed interested, drew all sorts of fabulous animals for their amusement, dragons, winged tigers, and things of that sort. I heard one of them explaining to the others that such beasts were common in Belat.

At Mud Point the captain decided to engage a tug which was coming down singlehanded looking for a job. We were leaking badly and the crew tired out with continual pumping. The price he had to pay was Rs. 600. When I asked him if he could afford it, he replied that they had 300,000 coconuts on board and that the market price would be about Rs. 60 a thousand. Not a bad profit on the Chinese tobacco, for which he had paid very little. We towed up to town the next day. She paid pilotage on fifteen feet owing largely to the water in her hold. I quite enjoyed the experience, and liked the people. When she departed she must have been taken down by one of the Kedgerie men, for I heard nothing more about her. I think she only came to the station for a pilot because she was leaking so badly.

No other similar stroke of luck came my way during the year on the river before going up to pass for mate. I was kept busy heaving the lead in vessels of all sorts, shapes and

sizes, and with pilots of varying personality. I was now sufficiently adept at the craft to be able to distinguish good work from bad and to appraise each one of my temporary masters at his proper value. The general level of efficiency was fairly high and even. There were, however, several men in each grade who stood out from among their fellows as being better equipped with the essential qualities of nerve, coolness and resourcefulness in emergency.

Mr. A. J. Milner, who followed Mr. Daly as Senior Branch Pilot, was certainly one of them. He had joined the Service in 1852, when the work of the port was practically all sail, and like most of the men of his time could make a sailing vessel do everything but talk. He was equally good with steam. But he was not popular with the leadsmen, as he kept the lead going all the time, merely calling the leadsmen in for meals, and indeed was probably not very popular anywhere, for he was dour and unsympathetic. But he was a fine pilot, and also a good judge of a horse. I have already mentioned Mr. W. H. Lindquist, the special pilot to the P. & O., who was in the same class as Mr. Milner.

Among the Master Pilots I would have given the palm to R. Rust, S. Ransom, J. Christie, F. T. Rayner, but there were many others almost equally good at the work. W. Kendal, for instance, who was one of the licensed pilots, was a very fine seaman and probably as good with a windjammer as anyone afloat. I recall an occasion when he was sailing a laden vessel up the river in the south-west monsoon and had an altercation with Captain Hamer who was then commanding the tug *Rattler* and wanted the job of towing the ship up. As there was a fine southerly breeze Kendal was all for sailing to Calcutta and making a little extra over and above the pilotage. As they ran up from Mud Point to Kulpee the *Rattler* kept close under their stern and occasionally hailed them with the suggestion that they should take his hawsers. At Diamond Harbour the wind fell light and Hamer, ranging alongside, again repeated his request. His exact words were, "Well, what's it going to

be, eggs or young 'uns ? ” I remember this because the conversation which ensued was of such a lurid description that the matter had to be settled by a court of enquiry. I forget which of the two called for a court, but I know that it sat to investigate the circumstances of the quarrel. Strong language had been used by both parties, but experts considered that Kendal had shown greater originality, some of his expletives being quite new to the Hooghly and



BRANCH PILOTS HUDSON AND R. RUST

probably acquired by him during his sea service. The court considered the case very carefully, and as a result both parties left without “ a stain on their character.”

Christie was for some time special pilot for the China mail steamers, and, his wife being in England, he lived in a flat with E. F. Hudson and Mrs. Hudson. The latter was a very good manageress and kept an excellent table. With them also lived Frank Collingwood, who later on, as a Branch Pilot, was in command of the brig *Fame* in the cyclone of November, 1891, when the *Coleroon* was lost.

He was a big, burly man, a confirmed bachelor, and quite a good fellow.

In the course of his journeyings to and from Penang in the China mail steamers Christie had made the acquaintance of several important Chinese, and amongst them Hong Ke, a Chinese gentleman of wealth and culture, whom he held in high esteem. This gentleman being in Calcutta on some matter of business, Christie invited him to tea in the flat, and introduced him to Mr. and Mrs. Hudson. Seated in the drawing-room they were quietly enjoying the sandwiches and other delicacies which Mrs. Hudson had prepared for the occasion when Collingwood, who had been down the river, suddenly appeared in the doorway. The only Chinamen he knew anything about were the Chinese boot-and shoe-makers who had rows of shops in Bentinck Street, and on catching sight of the great Hong Ke he shouted in his breezy manner, "Hullo, John, makee one piecee boot?" to the mortification of Christie, who, when he told the story afterwards, used to say, "There he stood, in the doorway, rolling his great stupid head, and grinning like an idiot. I felt so ashamed."

Many of the pilots with whom I have the lead at this time would let me look out and take charge of the vessel for quite long stretches of the river, especially when bound up on board of a steamer in ballast. They generally, however, relieved me as we approached the James and Mary's. I remember one occasion, though, when we were going up on a strong flood tide and the pilot came along to the bridge, that I asked him to let me "take her across the Gut," and being a good-natured soul he said, "All right, carry on," thereby adding greatly to my sense of self-esteem, a very necessary quality in a pilot's make-up.

Having finished the year on the river I went up for first mate. The examiners were Christie and Rayner, who declared themselves satisfied with my knowledge of seamanship and of the river. Shortly afterwards I was appointed to the *Cassandra*.

I spent my year as mate very happily on the *Cassandra*. She was commanded by Mr. J. Barnet, an extremely nice man to serve under, good looking and well made. He left the management of the crew and things generally to his mate, and interfered very little. We had a good *serang*, Ejut Ali, and a good crew of lascars, who gave no trouble. As I look back I realise what wonderful fellows they were. The boat would be hoisted out, sent away and hoisted in again perhaps several times in the course of the night, with possibly quite a long stiff pull in a choppy sea. They might be drenched with salt water or rain ; but never a complaint and always ready for the next job.

I recall two tragic incidents. The first occurred shortly after I joined the *Cassandra*.

We were lying in the moorings refitting, and the men were working aloft, reeving running gear and bending sails, when a lascar fell from the fore yard, landed on the norman pin (an iron bar which fitted into the windlass) and bounced off on to the deck. He was very badly hurt and only lived for a few minutes. The widow, accompanied by two children, came on board about half an hour after the accident. The second mate, the four leadsmen attached to the brig and I, being young and impulsive, immediately made her a present of all the money we had in our pockets. I forget the amount, probably not very much, for we were never overburdened with wealth. She departed calling down blessings on our heads. But almost immediately another woman came on board and introduced herself as the real widow, declaring by all the gods that the first lady was an impostor. What was to be done ? We were cleaned out and there was no possibility of recovering the cash, which had disappeared for ever.

The second case was that of a man who fell from aloft a few days after we had gone on the station after a spell in town. It was blowing hard and the foretopsail was being reefed, when a man suddenly fell backwards off the yard on to the fore brace, which broke his fall, and thence to the

deck. He had no broken bones, but had evidently received some internal injury, and died that evening. A couple of days after, orders came down to send him up to town as he was charged with the murder of a woman. The men who were with him on the yard were convinced by his exclamation before he fell that the ghost of the dead woman had appeared to him. They were all very superstitious and firm believers in *bhuts* or ghosts.

As mate I kept watch during the day alternately with the second mate, and came on at four every morning, relieving the pilot who had kept the two to four watch. As a rule the Eastern Channel Light was in sight somewhere to the northward. If I could not pick it up I would run up until I sighted it, and then bring her to the wind again. In cruising we kept on the port tack as much as possible when the tide was running ebb, until the Light bore about east-north-east, and then went round on the starboard tack until the Light bore about north. The mornings always felt fresh and invigorating and it was pleasant to watch the day breaking. At six the crew were turned out to wash decks. The sheep, of which we had perhaps a dozen or more, were also washed at the same time, and the coir mats on which the sheep stood in their pen were towed overboard until they were sweet and clean. On either side, fore and aft, were hencoops stocked with ducks and fowls, and forward of the sheep-pen lived the geese in their pen.

At six the pilots began to appear on deck in their pyjamas ready for their cup of coffee and a biscuit, and we rigged up the bathhouse, a square canvas tent with a perforated metal disc in the roof through which the hose was played on the man bathing. Everyone had to be properly dressed for the day by eight o'clock.

Mr. Barnet had a small collection of books which he put at my disposal and I made the acquaintance of Lubbock, Darwin, Haeckel, Büchner, Lyell, and others. I always read for an hour after breakfast,

and then wrote up the books and attended to any correspondence, interviewed the butler and kept account of any liquor consumed. There was always plenty to do. During my year the *Cassandra* had one spell of six months on end at the Sandheads owing to extensive repairs to one of the other brigs, and I did not find the time drag at all.

The *Chinsurah* was condemned and a new iron brig, the *Sarsuti*, came out from England. She was a very strong little vessel with a high rail, always very hot in warm weather and slow, but would stand up to any amount of wind, in fact she was at her best in hard weather, and was comparatively comfortable then. When a brig was considered no longer fit for service as a pilot vessel she usually continued her career as a lightship. These were fitted with three masts and carried quite large crews for vessels of that class. This was to enable them to work back if blown off their station in a cyclone. The *Chinsurah* was probably not considered sound enough for service as a lightship and became the headquarters of the Calcutta Naval Volunteers. She was moored just below the memorial known as the Pepper Box.

During my year as mate of the *Cassandra* the brigs were supplied with small trawls with which to collect specimens of marine fauna which might be living on the bed of the sea at the Sandheads. We were also given a supply of methylated spirits and some glass jars in which to preserve anything we could dredge up. The specimens were to be handed over to the Calcutta Museum. This was an entirely fresh interest for us and the officers of the brigs embarked on this new field of research with great enthusiasm. We had always fished with large surface nets for shrimps, bumalo and pomfret when lying at anchor in calm weather ; generally in the north-east monsoon, and the crew were keen fishermen with hand lines and got to work as soon as the anchor was down, pulling up catfish to add variety to their curry and rice.

The surface net was a large bag tapering off in a long tail, with an opening at the end which was tied up before the net was put over. This bag net was mounted on a couple of spars lashed together in the form of a cross. The vertical spar had a heavy bit of kentledge attached to its lower end to keep it down, and to its upper end was lashed a tackle from the main yardarm with which to hoist the net over the side and to lift it when we wanted to collect its contents. When in the water it was kept in position by three guys, one from each arm of the cross and one from the lower end of the vertical spar. We caught all sorts of things besides the bumalo and chingrees which swarmed on the surface and were a very welcome addition to our ordinary fare.

The net was hauled up at the end of each watch at night, the tail of the bag pulled on deck, unfastened, and the contents emptied into a *dekchi* or large metal dish, from which the crew ate their curry and rice. The catch was cautiously inspected by the light of a lantern, for there were nearly always one or two snakes to be seen mixed up with the rest of the collection. These snakes were, as a rule, about a yard and a half long and marked with black and yellow bands. I believe they were poisonous, but they were sluggish and dazed, out of their native element, and I never heard of anyone being bitten by one of them. Most of the haul would consist of shrimps and bumalo, these latter being what we valued most, for when properly cooked they took a lot of beating as a table delicacy, and we could not get them in Calcutta. We also caught little silver fish which made excellent whitebait. Occasionally a small shark found its way into the net, and would be knocked on the head and thrown overboard, for the sailorman shows no mercy to the shark, his natural enemy. We also got little fish which blew themselves up until they looked like small balloons.

With the small trawls with which we were now supplied we dredged up all sorts of curious creatures. Sea spiders, a

queer-looking thing resembling a yam or sweet potato, but evidently an animal of sorts, for its viscera was visible through its transparent skin, we caught also small black bodies which looked like the indiarubber teats of a baby's feeding-bottle. These last puzzled us, until I put one into a tumbler of salt water, when after a little time it expanded into an oblong anemone opening out at one end as a blue and white flower. If while it was expanding it was touched with a penholder or pencil, it would constrict in the place where it was being touched, and one could regulate its shape very much as one chose.

It struck me that these little black things, nicely boiled and served with a white sauce, would make quite an attractive-looking dish, and I suggested to my commander, Mr. Barnet, that we might try them. He raised no objection, and as Mr. Branch Pilot W——, a great authority on gastronomy and an expert exponent of the culinary art, happened to be on board at the time, I arranged with the cook that the succulent dainty should be served up that day at dinner, and that the dish should be placed in front of me. My place at mess was opposite the captain, next to whom was seated Mr. Branch Pilot W——, a big man with a florid complexion, who had a very good opinion of himself and of his own importance. When the dish was uncovered it did not look at all bad, the little black things showing daintily through the white sauce, and it immediately caught Mr. W——'s eye.

"What have we here?" he exclaimed. "Mushrooms? Or are they truffles?"

I told the butler to take the dish to Mr. W—— that he might help himself, which he did liberally and took a good mouthful of the new delicacy. I watched him closely, but instead of the pleased expression of a gourmet who has discovered a new and delicious dish his face became a deep crimson and his eyes expressed horror and fear. He hastily made his way on deck and audibly got rid of the unwelcome morsel.

When he returned to the festive board he was in a very nasty temper.

"Mud," he shouted. "Mud and sand. Where did you get the infernal stuff?"

He was right, for I tasted one very gingerly and it was as unpalatable as it could be. He took a lot of pacifying, and needless to say the dish did not again appear on the menu.

We sent up to the museum quite a large collection of specimens as the result of our dredging operations. The mate of the *Sarsuti*, the other brig at the Sandheads at the time, was distressed by the manner in which his commander would jam all the different specimens together in one bottle. Said he bitterly:

"The old fool has spoilt a lovely lot of spiders by jamming them in with a lot of sweet potato. He rams them in with a fork and breaks all their legs off."

I had no trouble of that sort and was allowed to arrange the specimens as I chose. In a short time there was a well-filled row of bottles and pickle jars hanging under the awning boom, and amongst them an extra large jar which contained a fine snake, for I thought the museum ought to have one.

On coming on watch one dark morning at four a.m. I thought I saw a figure standing on the skylight and touching the specimens. Approaching cautiously I was horrified to find a gentleman who had had his grog stopped, busily engaged slaking his thirst from the snake jar. When I remonstrated with him he said that had I been possessed of any delicacy of feeling I would not have noticed what he was doing. I apologised for my lack of delicacy and pleaded in excuse my anxiety for the safe preservation of the specimens, which had been collected with a good deal of trouble and would certainly deteriorate if they were deprived of the spirit in which they were being preserved. I also promised him a glass of whisky if he refrained from touching the specimens. Fortunately he departed during the course

of the day and I had no more trouble with the collection, which is possibly still in the museum.

It was about this time that a ship arrived at the Sandheads which had lost all the apprentices, six in number, while rounding the Cape. The hands were aloft reefing the topsails, when one of the apprentices lost his hold and fell overboard. The ship was hove-to and one of the boats put out, and manned by the apprentices. They pulled in the direction in which their companion had last been seen and were soon lost to sight from the ship, as a heavy rain squall came on just then, and when it had cleared off there was no sign of the boat anywhere. The captain cruised about in the locality until nightfall and then very reluctantly abandoned all hope and continued on his voyage. I cannot be sure of the name of the ship, but to the best of my recollection it was the *British Yeoman* which thus lost all her apprentices.

I cannot be certain either of the name of a vessel which came in with her poop completely gutted by a sea which had washed away all the after-cabins, and with them the chronometers and navigating instruments. Their only chronometer was the mate's watch. One of the apprentices had a sextant and some books which, being in the forward deckhouse, had escaped, and with these they had managed to navigate the vessel to the Sandheads.

When catting the anchor one day on the brig I collected some of the black clayey mud which came up with it and found that it was quite serviceable for modelling. I had made friends in Calcutta with Mr. Purchas, the Deputy Mint Master, who sometimes invited me to dinner. He had living with him Count Von Langa, the artist, who designed the coins and medals at the Mint, and whose work I much admired. I had looked on while he amused himself by making a portrait in clay of Mr. Purchas, and I decided to try my hand at modelling with the black mud. It worked quite well and I made several medallions in low relief, which the sitters were kind enough to consider good

likenesses of themselves. Whether they were so or not, I got a lot of amusement out of it. Amongst others I did heads of C. Collingwood, senior, and W. T. Wawn, who was himself fond of working in water colour and generally had some little sketches of effects on the river to show me when he came on board.

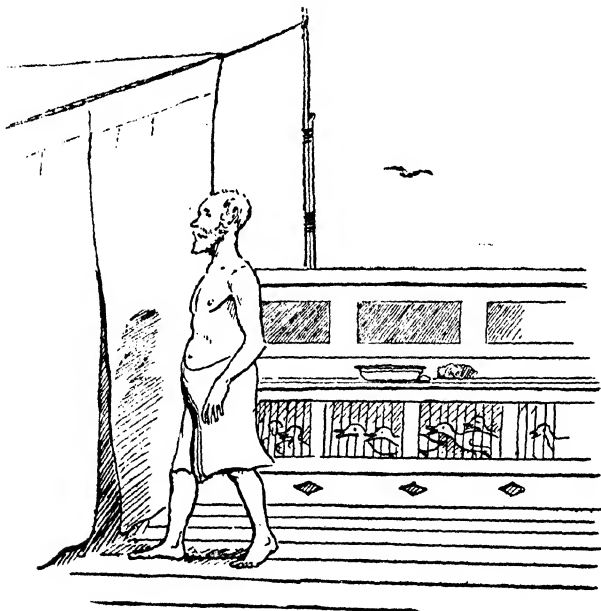
CHAPTER X

Christmas on the brigs—Mr. Pei Ho Jones—The adjutant and the soap—Escaped leeches—‘What happened at the inn’—A visit to the tea-planters—Life in the Terai—Tea-planting and trading—A plague of fleas—The overloaded elephant—An earthquake.

I RECOLLECT all sorts of things which happened during my year as mate, and recall especially our jollification at Christmas. We used to keep up Christmas in good style. The brigs were dressed with all the flags in the signal locker, and we did ourselves well in every way. In the evening the captain told me to brew punch, giving me *carte blanche* as to liquor. I mixed all sorts of spirits and wines and added a bottle of beer, a lemon or two, a lot of sugar, and a kettle of boiling water. It was voted a very excellent brew, only one man complaining that it was rather weak.

Under its mellowing influence Mr. Pei Ho Jones related the tale of the ‘Painful Happenings at the Inn.’ Mr. Jones had been a sailing master in the Navy before becoming a Hooghly pilot and had seen service on the Pei Ho river, hence the sobriquet. He was a quiet, elderly little man with a rosy complexion and a white beard. An old bachelor, he lived when ashore in a room at the Great Eastern Hotel in Calcutta. He had had many strange experiences which he related in simple language and with the minimum allowance of adjectives. He would tell his story of the adjutant and the bar of yellow soap, for at that time the adjutant (a large bird like a magnified stork, now practically unknown) was very much in evidence in Calcutta, where he assisted the municipality and the jackals in their arduous task of scavenging.

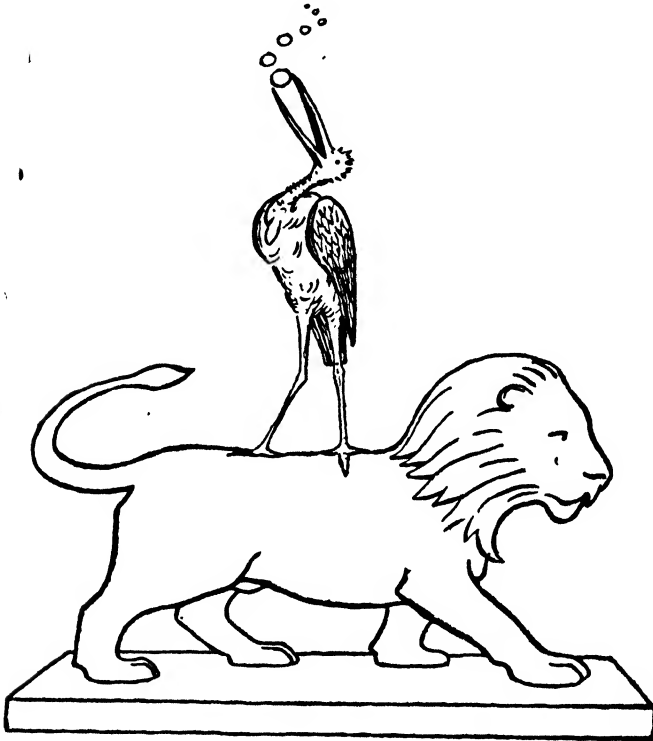
Mr. Jones told how on one occasion, when about to drive in a *gharry* from the Great Eastern Hotel to the Port Office, he was pestered by a hawker who pressed him to purchase a bar of yellow soap, and went so far as to thrust the bar of soap into the *gharry*, saying, "Six annas, Sahib." Mr. Jones was usually a person of equable temper, but on this



MR. JONES GOING TO THE BATH

occasion, being a bit off colour and rather irascible, he flung the soap into the road and told the *gharry wallah* to drive on. As he drove away he saw the adjutant, which was standing gloomily on the stone lion that adorns the arched entrance to Government House, suddenly pull itself together, swoop down into the road, bolt the bar of soap, and return to its perch on the lion, followed by yells of execration from the infuriated hawker. Mr. Jones pro-

ceeded to the Port Office, and having studied the latest reports of the river, and discussed the news of the day with his friends in the pilots' room, drove home again to the Great Eastern.



THE BUBBLING ADJUTANT

As he approached the hotel he found the road blocked by a dense crowd of people staring up at the lion over the entrance to Government House, where the adjutant with uplifted beak was blowing a continuous stream of the most beautiful iridescent bubbles. . . .

Mr. Jones had other tales to tell. There was the one of the crocodile and the elephants at Moulmein, and the story

about the leeches. He had been appointed to take down a French barque, which he had joined in Garden Reach at about ten o'clock at night, and was told that the captain and his wife had retired to rest in their cabin. As the weather was very hot Mr. Jones directed his boy to make up his bed on the saloon table underneath the skylight, which was open. In the middle of the night he was aroused by voices, and heard exclamations of horror and distress proceeding from the captain's cabin, the door of which suddenly opened and a man and a woman without any clothing emerged hurriedly, waving their arms about and talking volubly about some misfortune which had occurred to them. By the glimmering light of the oil lamp Mr. Jones observed that they were both covered with black knobs about the size of walnuts.

It appeared that they were taking a large jar of leeches to a doctor friend at Mauritius. By some mischance the jar had been upset, and the hungry little creatures had pounced joyfully upon the captain and his wife, who were sleeping with nothing on because of the intense heat. They were going to pull the bloated little animals off, but Mr. Jones implored them not to do that, pointing out that a pinch of salt would cause the blood-suckers to relinquish their hold voluntarily, and having discovered the salt cellar he helped them to apply it. He said that they both seemed very subdued all the next day, as though the leeches had rather taken it out of them.

But on this occasion Mr. Jones told us the story of 'What happened to him at the Inn.' He had only just returned from long leave to England and we asked him if he had anything of interest to report. He had. It appeared that shortly before returning he had spent a few days at an inn on the south coast, which had been recommended to him as being an ideal spot for anyone in search of a little rest and quiet. He arrived there in the afternoon and took a stroll round the neighbourhood, which he described as picturesque and restful.

At dinner he had a little table to himself. There were other little tables occupied by the guests of the inn. Amongst them he noticed a quiet-looking, elderly couple. The lady, a thin little woman with a somewhat careworn expression, the gentleman was of stouter build, and his rubicund face and generally congested appearance proclaimed the 'good-doer.' Mr. Jones was not feeling sociably inclined and sat in the lounge by himself after dinner studying the papers while he consumed two or perhaps three whiskies and sodas—he was not quite sure of the exact number, but he was studying a new brand and always liked to do things thoroughly—before retiring to rest. As he approached his bedroom he noticed that outside the door of the room next to his were two pairs of shoes, one male and one female. He concluded with his usual astuteness that his next-door neighbours were probably a married pair, but in any case a pair, and proceeded to make his toilet for the night. This he explained to us was a nightgown. Pyjamas were all very well on the Hooghly, but for real comfort and freedom give him the old-fashioned nightgown. He turned in, and under the influence of the new brand was soon sleeping soundly.

Now Mr. Jones had been quite right in concluding that the people next door were a pair. They were, in fact, the very couple which he had noticed in the dining-room, and the husband was unable to sleep, owing to an acute attack of indigestion following the liberal helping of roast pork which he had stowed away. This attack, instead of passing off, became more violent, and it was soon obvious to the sad-faced lady that if she was to get any sleep at all something would have to be done about it. She was a woman of resource and had faced similar situations. She knew what to do and she descended with a sheet of brown paper to the kitchen to search for the mustard pot. The servants had all retired for the night, there was no one to help her. But she knew where to look for such things as mustard, and having discovered the pot, very soon concocted a good

strong mustard plaister with which she ascended to the corridor. It was in darkness, her candle having gone out, but she knew her way about and was soon inside the bedroom.

She was surprised and relieved to hear her husband snoring loudly. But having taken all the trouble to make a mustard plaister she was not going to waste it. She groped her way to the bed guided by the musical notes of the sleeper, carefully turned down the bedclothes, very carefully lifted the nightgown without awakening the patient, applied the plaister where it would do most good, crawled into bed, and was soon in the land of dreams.

Mr. Jones said that somewhere about one a.m. he was awakened by a burning sensation in the region of the abdomen. Half-awake he tried to recall what he could possibly have eaten which would have affected him so unpleasantly. Becoming wideawake he sat up in bed, and became aware that he was not alone. By the bedside on a little table was his candle and a box of matches. He struck a match and lit his candle. The intruder at the same moment came to life and, looking at him with round-eyed horror, backed away off the bed and towards the door. Mr. Jones tore the burning torture off his stomach, waved it in the air and thundered, "Is this your work, madam?" She was gone, and Mr. Jones heard the key turned in the lock of the next room. For the information of any of us who might encounter similar trouble, he said that salad oil and crushed arrowroot was a soothing dressing.

The tale was sympathetically received, the punch was ladled out of the large soup tureen, and we drank to Mr. Jones' health. Other stories were told until the brew was finished, and one of the younger members danced a *pas seul* to a banjo accompaniment with the soup tureen on his head. From the difficulty we had in arousing the pilot of the turn some two hours later, when an inward-bound steamer came to us, I was led to believe that in my haphazard mixture

of alcohols I had accidentally stumbled upon a strong narcotic.

The year as mate came to an end and in due course I passed my exam. and became a Mate Pilot. There were rather too many of us to share the small vessels of less than 800 tons which we were entitled to pilot. This meant long



THE MUSTARD PLAISTER

spells at the Sandheads with very little to occupy our time beyond watch-keeping at night and reading the papers and magazines which arrived every week from England.

I have a dilapidated pocket-book which belongs to that period. Most pilots kept pocket-books in which they noted down the rate at which the tide rose and fell on different days of tide and at different seasons of the year. It was very important to know this, for if, for instance, when proceeding down on a falling tide the semaphore near the bar which had to be crossed showed a rise, which if added

to the amount of water known to be on the bar at low water gave, say, two feet more than the vessel's draught, by referring to the pocket-book, and seeing that on a similar day of tides the water had fallen at the rate of so many minutes to the foot, it would be possible to estimate whether it would be safe or not to proceed.

So when I became a pilot I started to keep a note-book, and I still have the remains of it. Unfortunately the early pages have disappeared and the first entry concerns a small British India Steamer, the *Busheer*, which I took up the river in September, 1885. But I know that I had been piloting vessels of all sorts for many months prior to that, and had paid a visit to the tea-planters in the Terai.

As I have already said, work for the junior pilots was very slack in 1884. Spells of two or three weeks at the Sandheads, waiting with half a dozen other mate pilots for the little ships of our tonnage which were none too numerous, were the order of the day, and I had one long spell of over a month. I decided that it would pay me better to take a month's privilege leave on full pay, and in the early part of 1885 accepted an invitation from a tea-planter to spend a week or two with him in the Terai at the foot of the Himalayas.

I had met several planters in Calcutta, where they came for a little rest and recreation after the labours of the tea-making season, and had found them a nice, cheery lot of men. So when E. C. Gilliam, of Burra Chenga, suggested that I should come up and spend a fortnight with him, I jumped at the offer and put in an application for leave, which was granted. The arrangement was that I should meet Gilliam, or 'Blobs' as he was known to his friends, at Kurseong, whence he would conduct me to Burra Chenga. I travelled light, my kit consisting of a suitcase and a banjo, caught the train at Sealdah, and arrived in due course at Siliguri, where I changed into one of the little carriages of the Darjiling and Himalaya Railway. Having seen nothing but flat country for some seven years, I was

very much impressed by the mountain scenery as we steamed up to Kurseong.

On arriving there I was handed a note from Gilliam, who regretted that he had been unable to get away from the garden and asked me to make my way down to him on the following morning. I should find an elephant waiting to take me over the Balasun river and a pony waiting to take me to his garden. I put up at the hotel for the night and started early the next morning to march down the hill, accompanied by a coolie carrying my baggage.

We found the elephant waiting at the crossing, and a nice-looking little black pony waiting on the farther bank. I asked the *sayce* if the pony knew his way home, and on being assured that he did, climbed up and gave him his head. After trotting along for a mile or so the intelligent animal turned off through a plantation of tea bushes and halted outside a bungalow where I dismounted. A man took the pony and told me that the sahib was in the tea-house but would be in directly, so I sat down in the verandah where a *khitmagar* promptly brought me a whisky and soda.

After a few minutes a big, red-faced man in riding-kit came in and joined me. We chatted about the weather and my walk down from Kurseong. I thought he was a visitor, and said that if he wanted to see Gilliam I believed he was in the tea-house. He replied, "I don't think so, for I have just come from there."

It then dawned on me that possibly I was in the wrong bungalow and asked him if I was at Burra Chenga. He said, "No, this is Chota Chenga and my name is Helps." Apologising for the intrusion I blamed the pony who ought to have known his way to his own stable. But it appeared that the pony had originally belonged to Mr. Helps and had been sold by him to Gilliam. Mr. Helps proposed that I should stay with him for a day or two before moving on to Burra Chenga. I thanked him but thought that I had better be getting along to Gilliam, who would be expecting me. The pony was brought round again and this time

managed to deliver me at the right address, where Gilliam was amused to learn of my mistake. His bungalow was situated on a small hill, overlooking the tea which stretched away on either side. Like all the other bungalows which I saw in the Terai it was surrounded by a wide verandah and was very comfortable.

The life on the garden interested me greatly. In the early morning we rode round the estate and saw the people at work. In one place they would be hoeing and cleaning the bushes of weeds, in another an army of them, mostly women, would be plucking the leaf which they placed as they gathered it into large baskets carried on their backs and held in position by bands across their foreheads. They were all hill-people, short and broad, with thick legs. They were mostly clad in blue, with a red handkerchief tied round the waist or neck, and were a merry, good-tempered crew, who responded cheerily when Gilliam, who spoke their language, addressed them jokingly. The rest of the morning would be spent in the tea-house watching the various processes to which the leaf was subjected in preparing it for the market. I learnt that it had to be first withered, then rolled, left to ferment, dried in a sort of oven, then sifted and classified, and finally packed in lead-lined boxes and despatched to the market in Calcutta.

Tasting the tea was a serious business. A row of little china pots with lids was arranged on a long table. The different classes of teas were infused in these pots for five minutes. The liquor was then poured into small basins and left to stand for a while, the tea leaves shaken out of the pots into the lids which were then placed wrong side up on top of the pots, and all was ready for the sahib to come and form his opinion as to the sort of tea they were making.

To form this opinion, he took a mouthful of the concoction, held it for a moment, spat it out, had a good look at the bowl to see whether the liquor was creaming properly, and noted the colour of the tea leaves standing in the lid. If it was not to his liking there was probably some-

thing to be rectified in one or other of the various processes through which the tea had passed.

When the pluckers came in with their leaf each basket was weighed and the coolies received payment for what they had plucked in excess of the regulation weight which they were expected to pluck. This was paid on the spot in *dhulia pice*, which were simply small chunks of copper without stamp or device of any kind. In the afternoon the planters visited each other, compared notes as to the sort of tea they were making, and discussed the various blights which affected the bushes. These I gathered were 'red spider' and mosquito blight, both very much dreaded.

Tea-making was in full swing and Gilliam was very busy. He had just sent down his first 'break' or batch of chests for that season and was anxiously awaiting a telegram from the agents, who had promised to let him know what prices his tea had fetched at the auction. A couple of days after my arrival I had been making a sketch of the pluckers at work, and on returning to the bungalow for *tiffin* found Gilliam looking blankly at a telegram which had just arrived and which he handed to me with a suppressed groan. It read : '*Average nine annas, not equal to samples.*' "What do they mean," he cried, "by not equal to samples?" *Tiffin* was a dismal meal; I could think of nothing to say to lessen the blow.

Shortly after *tiffin*, as we were sitting gloomily in the verandah, a neighbouring planter rode up and asked if Gilliam had received any news of the sale. On being shown the unpleasant telegram he was full of sympathy. "I can't understand it, Blobs; for you told me that you were making quite good tea and expecting to get really good prices." Shortly after, two other planters rolled up, who were followed by others until nearly every man in the district was present, and the servant was kept busy opening bottles of Pilsener, which was the favourite form of refreshment at the time. They all expressed the greatest amazement at the bad news, and were full of sympathy for poor

Gilliam, and hoped that he would not lose his job as the result of the poor stuff he had sent up to the market. After this had gone on for some time and a vast amount of beer had been consumed they suddenly with one accord burst into a prolonged roar of laughter. The whole thing was a merry practical joke, and the telegram had been sent by a confederate in Calcutta. The real telegram from the agents arrived shortly after and we learnt that the average price realised was, if I recollect aright, thirteen annas, which was quite good.

This little episode was very typical of the life and the men in the Terai as I found them. They were a cheery, happy-go-lucky crew. The place was very unhealthy and life very uncertain. They worked hard and lived hard, consumed a good deal of Pilsener together, and were happy enough when not bowled over by malaria. The place which had the worst reputation for this ailment was a garden called Nuxalbari and while I was staying with Gilliam the manager of Nuxalbari died of malaria. I attended his funeral at Kurseong, to which place we rode on ponies. His name was Orr and he was a brother of the policeman at Chittagong with whom I sometimes stayed when special pilot of the Chittagong steamers.

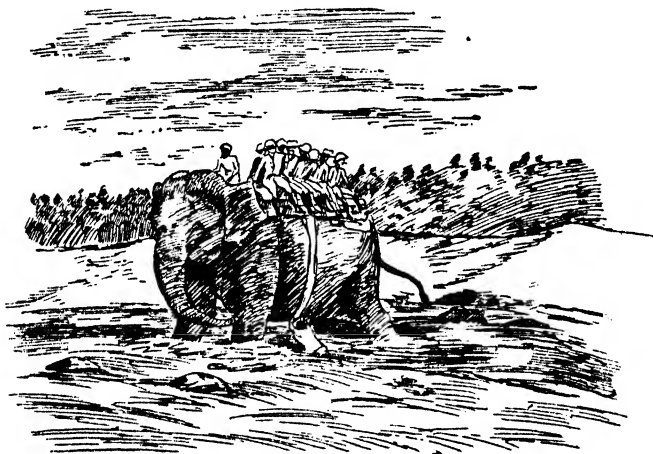
Coming back from the funeral, which was attended by all the planters of the district, I found myself riding alongside of Hilliard, a well-known character with a great reputation as a practical joker. We were chatting quietly together when suddenly without any warning he seized my pony's bridle and pulled me over the *khud* on to a narrow track running steeply down the hillside to the westward. It was done so quickly that I was unable to protest, and it was all I could do to keep from going over the pony's head. He dragged us along as fast as he could, yelling with laughter all the time, and at last said that I was going to stay the night at his bungalow, where we eventually arrived. He sent word down to Gilliam that I would come along in the morning, and we spent a cheery evening together. He was

quite a character and I was told many stories of his eccentricities.

After a fortnight with Gilliam I spent a few days with Sharpe at Mechi, and then with Feltwell and afterwards with Sandys at Panighatta. It was a most enjoyable time. The more I saw of the planters the more I liked them. Each man was a little king in his own territory, and seemed to rule his subjects very wisely, and well. It was, of course, to their interest to keep their coolies well and contented, to take a paternal interest in their comfort and welfare, and to smooth out any little difficulties or disagreements that might occur amongst them. They had their little trials to put up with, and I may mention as an instance the occasion when I rode with Gilliam to call on one of them who was being worried by a plague of fleas. We found him living under canvas in his compound, the bungalow having been invaded by millions of fleas. I stood at the door of the sitting-room and listened to the tap, tap, tap of the insects as they sprang about merrily on some newspapers which had been spread on the floor. The planter called one of his servants and told him to stand in the room for a minute. When the man emerged his legs up to the knees were black with fleas. The planter appeared to take the unpleasant visitation very philosophically and said that the fleas would all be gone in a day or two.

I was sorry to leave the Terai when my month's leave came to an end. The day before returning I was one of a party at Mechi, Jimmy Sharpe's place. We spent a merry afternoon playing poker to an accompaniment of Pilsener. Amongst us was C. F. Daniels of Tirrihana, an ex-naval officer. Although a comparatively small man, he was possessed of unusual strength and must have had a very tough constitution. After the poker party we all rode to Gilliam's place, and as we passed the dry bed of a water-course filled with large stones and boulders Daniels gave a whoop and proceeded to ride down it at breakneck speed, regardless of consequences to himself or his pony. We

jogged along to Burra Chenga, and as we were riding up to the bungalow Daniels galloped into our midst, cannoned off one of the party and crashed into a tree which brought him and his mount to the ground. He seemed rather shaken, so Gilliam put him to bed. The party then broke up and I went on with Sandys to Panighatta where I was to spend the night. After dinner, while sitting with Sandys in the



DEPARTURE BY ELEPHANT

verandah, Daniels rode up apparently none the worse for his spill and asked for the elephant to cross the river ; but we learnt next day that he had two broken ribs.

There was a big gathering at the farewell breakfast at Sandys' bungalow and a good many of the planters turned up to see me off. The elephant was brought out and most of the party climbed on to its back, which was so overcrowded that one passenger fell off in mid-stream. I made sure that he was gone for good, and was relieved to find as we climbed up the farther bank that he was clinging to the elephant's girths and all was well.

Conditions in the Terai have changed very much since

then. I am told that many of the gardens have gone out of cultivation and reverted to jungle. Before leaving I met the man who replaced poor young Orr at Nuxalbari and remarked what a strong, healthy-looking person he was ; but in the following cold weather, when looking on at the sports meeting at Ballygunge, I sat next to a stranger of emaciated appearance who I discovered in the course of conversation hailed from the Terai and gave me news of my friends there. I enquired how the new man at Nuxalbari was getting along. He looked surprised and said that he himself was that person. So changed was he by repeated attacks of malaria that I had not recognised him.

It was in the Terai that I experienced my first earthquake. I was staying with Feltwell at the time and we were enjoying our early cup of tea in the verandah of his bungalow when I heard a rumbling noise and found everything shaking. I said, "That sounds like a traction-engine. I did not know you had one up here." But Feltwell shouted, "It's an earthquake !" and ran outside where I followed him. It only lasted a few seconds and did no damage.

CHAPTER XI

Boarding the *Cherbourg*—I am nearly drowned—Tales of the cyclones—The colonial bishop—My first cyclone—The *Cassandra* loses her cable—A dreadful night—Heavy loss of life—The *Godiva*—the loss of the tug *Retriever*—Mr. Newby T. Wawn and Abdul—“Not too much soda.”

AFTER my very enjoyable trip to the Terai I went back to work again. Things were still pretty slack, but not quite so bad as they had been and I managed to make some sort of a living, getting one or two vessels a month. I was chumming at this time with W. Mackintosh, of Mackintosh, Burn and Co., J. B. Warwick of the same company, and H. Wellard of Kerr Dodds, in a top flat over Solomons the opticians, where we were very comfortable and happy together. The missing leaves of that pocket-book if I could find them would make mention of the schooner *Ruth Topping*, the barque *Umvoti*, and the little twin-screw steamer *Medina* belonging to the British India Company, for I very well remember piloting those vessels amongst others. But the first entry which remains concerns the *Busheer*, and reads as follows :

“September 8th : 3rd day of springs. Put on board S.S. *Busheer*, Captain Johnson, at 15.15. 19.0, Anchored at Saugor. September 9th : 7.0, Turned and proceeded. 7.40, Sighted nine feet at Kedgerree Semaphore. 7.50, Ten feet. 7.55, Eleven feet. 8.10, Twelve feet. 8.20, Thirteen feet,” and so on all the way up. We passed Atcheepore at 11.42 with twenty-one feet showing at the semaphore, and got to Garden Reach at 13.15 with the ebb down.

My next record in the old book reads : “September 15th : 8rd day of neaps. French barque *Cherbourg*, draught

19 feet 6 inches, from Calcutta in tow of tug *Columbus*." I have good reason to remember that trip down the river, for I was nearly drowned while boarding the vessel in Garden Reach. There was very strong freshet in the river, the ebb tide running as much as seven or eight knots an hour. After dinner, about 8.30, I took a dinghy from the *ghât* at Kidderpur and proceeded down to Garden Reach where the *Cherbourg* was lying in the stream ready to leave in the morning. As we pulled out from the *ghât* I noticed strong eddies by the mooring buoys, past which the tide was rushing with a good deal of noise.

The *Cherbourg* was lying off Garden House Point, a bad spot in which to anchor in the freshets, because of the eddies, but the harbour master had not been able to drop any lower as there were two other ships anchored just below the Point.

The dinghy *wallah* turned and headed the tide just ahead of the *Cherbourg*, but we were swept past the vessel without being able to catch hold of anything. We pulled close in to the southern bank, where we found an eddy tide which was running up the river, and were soon in a position from which we could have another shot at getting on board, and this time I was determined not to miss her. As the dinghy swept along the vessel's side I grabbed hold of the man-rope by the side of the rope ladder; but the dinghy shot from under my feet, the manrope being wet slipped through my hands, and I found myself in the water. I went under the harbour master's boat and on coming to the surface again found in my hand one of the boat's fenders, which I must have clutched as I went under.

My first idea was to strike out for the southern bank, but when I heard the sound of the water rushing past the mooring buoys at Mutteabrooj moorings, and thought of the line of eddies which would certainly be there, I altered my mind and decided to keep out in the stream. An attempt to take my jacket off nearly finished me, for I went under and found it very difficult to get to the surface

again. The two ships which were anchored below the point went by in a flash. I decided that my chances were practically nil, and that I was finished. Strangely enough this did not distress me, my sensation was rather one of relief that all the bother of life was over. Suddenly I heard the voice of the dinghy *wallah* calling. My philosophic resignation was gone immediately, and I yelled to him to come. It was very dark and I could not see the dinghy at once, but I swam in the direction of the voice, and when the dinghy *wallah* offered me the end of his boathook I seized it eagerly, climbed into the boat, and got rid of a lot of muddy water which I had swallowed.

As we were making our way to the shore we met the harbour master's boat which had been sent to my rescue and to which I transferred myself, belongings, and servant, and was soon put on board the *Cherbourg*, where I relieved the harbour master, and spent the night watching the steering, for owing to the eddies the vessel was sheering about all over the place and I feared she would part her cable.

Referring again to the notebook. It says: "3.30, Started to unmoor"—which means that she was moored with two anchors down because of the violence of the current. The next entry is: "7.0, Turned and proceeded." The tug *Columbus*, Captain Stone, had come ahead after we had hove short, and we had passed hawsers, picked up, and catted the anchor, and were off. "8.15, Abreast Atcheepore. Crossed Moyapur Bar with twelve feet up, bad eddies below Devil's Point" (they must have been unusually bad or I should not have made a note of them). "10.15, Brought up at Fultah, the *serang* having shown 18 feet best track Nynan."

What happened was that as we towed through Fisherman's Point anchorage a steam launch blew his whistle to attract our attention, and showed us a black board with the news about Nynan, which is a bar just above the James and Mary shoal. I learnt subsequently that on the previous

day the sailing ship *Argomene*, in pilotage charge of Mr. Newby Wawn, had grounded in Nynan, very nearly capsizing. She got off on the night's tide and towed down below the James and Mary, but her grounding had caused the bar to silt up.

It was rather a business turning round after reading the notice on the blackboard, for we were flying down with a strong ebb tide, and by the time we got round were below the anchorage, where the channel was none too wide. Stone, the tug master, was one of the best and turned me beautifully.

We waited there, hanging on to the tug and with our anchor under foot, until the tide had risen. "12.45, Turned and proceeded. 13.45, Eastern Gut 12 feet up and slack water. 14.15, Diamond Harbour Custom House abreast. 17.15, Came to at Kedgerree, near the Upper Dredge buoy in 8 fathoms with 35 fathoms of chain. Rode a quiet tide. September 16th : 6.0, Turned and proceeded. 9.25, Lower Gasper Light." And that is all it says, but I probably got on board the brig about one o'clock and have no doubt that I was glad to get there.

After my exciting time in boarding the *Cherbourg* there was more excitement waiting for me at the Sandheads ; for in September, 1885, I went through my first cyclone, on board the p.v. *Cassandra*. The old hands had spun us many a yarn about the cyclones they had been through and of the ships which had been lost in them. There was the story of the two Bengal pilots who were returning from furlough in the days before the Suez Canal, when everyone travelled round the Cape. They were passengers on one of Green's ships, and as they ran up the Bay of Bengal their knowledge of local weather conditions told them that they were running into a cyclone. With some diffidence they acquainted the captain with their opinion and suggested that it might be wise to heave-to until the weather looked a little less threatening. But the captain of one of Green's ships was rather a dignitary, and this particular captain did

not want any outside advice. He said that when he wanted their opinion he would ask them for it. Some few hours later when they 'got it in the neck' he did ask them what they thought he had better do. But there was then nothing to be done but see it through, and they were dismayed and very nearly lost.

There was the story of the other dignitary, a colonial bishop, who was passenger in a sailing vessel under similar conditions in the Bay of Bengal and who, in the height of



THE SOLE SURVIVOR

the tempest, managed to make his way to where the skipper stood under the lee of the after-deckhouse and asked him what he thought of their chances. On receiving the reply that their only hope was in the Deity, he cried in his agony, "Good Heavens! Is it as bad as all that?" Another man told how several days after the Midnapore cyclone, when he was in charge of a sailing vessel, they rescued an Indian who was floating on the roof of a hut, who told them that he had originally been one of five on the roof. From his plump condition they reluctantly concluded that he must have eaten the other four.

From these and other tales of the same kind I gathered that a cyclone was rather an awful experience. I was now

about to see for myself whether it was as bad as they made out.

It was the 21st of September. We had had easterly weather for some days and, as always with easterly weather, there was a strong set to the westward. The glass was not particularly low, somewhere about 29.80, but was falling slowly all the time. I was on the *Cassandra*, of which Mr. Barnet was still in command. There were, to the best of my recollection, five other pilots on board besides myself, amongst them W. Kendal, P. Paulson and C. Collingwood, senior. With easterly weather and a strong current running to the westward it was impossible to keep on the pilot station under sail, and the *Cassandra*, which was acting as buoy brig and taking pilots out of outward-bound vessels, was anchored a couple of miles south of the Eastern Channel Light.

About mid-day we sighted a smoke to the northward, which proved to be the country ship, *Merchantman*, towing out. At 14.0 the boat was sent away to her, and as it had difficulty in fetching back, because of the strong easterly set, we had to trip the anchor and drift until we could pick it up, when Mr. Paine, Mate Pilot, came on board and said that Captain Mourylien of the *Merchantman* did not like the look of the weather and wanted our opinion as to whether it was cyclonic or not. The opinion of the pilots on board was that it was just an easterly gale, and we signalled that opinion to the ship. She cast off the tug, made sail on the port tack, and the tug proceeded up-channel.

As the afternoon wore on the weather grew worse, the easterly squalls increasing in violence and the current to the westward becoming stronger. The glass began to fall more rapidly, and a succession of low, ragged-looking clouds kept racing across the sky. As the *Cassandra* was dragging her anchor we paid out more chain, until we were riding with a scope of sixty fathoms. Some five fathoms or more of it would be seen stretching tautly ahead as we lifted to an

extra large wave, to disappear the next moment as the brig buried her nose in a churned-up mass of foam. It was obvious that if things got much worse there would be a likelihood of the cable parting, and I asked the older men whether in that case, with the strong westerly set which was running, we should be able to weather False Point. They pointed out that the current setting into Balasore Bay would have to sweep down south past False Point and would probably carry a vessel clear of the Point.

With the dense mass of cloud overhead it became dark early. We slung our cots to the beams in the 'tweendecks and turned in, but the brig was rolling heavily as well as plunging, and every now and again the cot would bang up against the beams in a way which made getting to sleep a matter of difficulty. I don't know whether any of the others got any sleep, but I know that I did not, but lay there listening to the howling of the wind and the noise of the chain on the windlass as she surged back to some extra large wave.

Suddenly the brig's motion became easier, and I heard the officer of the watch sing out that the cable had parted. On going on deck I found all the others there, discussing whether it would be advisable to heave in what was left of the cable, or slip it and make what sail we could without loss of time, in view of the importance of getting south as much as possible and clear of the tails of the sands. The pin was knocked out of the shackle, the cable slipped, the lower topsails loosed and sheeted home, the fore staysail set, and the brig brought to the wind on the port tack. She lay right down to it, putting the lee rail under, and almost immediately the lower foretopsail blew away; but the lower maintopsail hung on for some time before splitting and blowing to ribbons.

The squalls now were of intense violence, and the noise of the wind deafening. It was impossible to raise the head above the weather rail, where the spray and rain struck the face like a charge of shot. The lascars, although excellent

seamen, and good boatmen in ordinarily hard weather, are apt to throw up the sponge when things look really desperate, and from the forepeak came a dismal chorus of "Allah!" which did not tend to make matters more cheerful. But on that, as on subsequent occasions, I found that the *serang*, *tyndals* (boatswain's mates) and two or three of the men refused to take it lying down, and kept on deck. Towards daybreak the weather eased up a bit, the squalls became less violent, and the pilots assisted the few men who were still working to get two lower topsails from the sail locker and bend them. The wind was still easterly and the problem of weathering False Point still our chief concern.

As daylight came in the wind fell light and we found ourselves in a very heavy, confused sea which appeared to be breaking in all directions. A cast of the deep-sea lead brought up sand on the arming, and we fixed our position as somewhere west of the Ridge. It was very thick and murky. The wind died right away, and we lay tumbling about for some little time before we got it, again from the westward and stood back for the Station. In the afternoon a ship hove in sight to the southward with her foretopmast gone, and we put a pilot on board her. I cannot remember her name, but we learnt that she had been through the centre of the storm off False Point and had picked up the second mate of the *Merchantman*, the only survivor of that vessel, which had foundered. This officer became an Assistant Harbour Master at Calcutta and some years afterwards fell overboard from the steam launch *Enchantress* in Garden Reach and was drowned.

The *Cassandra* had not felt the full violence of the storm as she was some distance from the centre when it struck the coast. We lost no spars or boats and got off very lightly with the loss of a couple of sails.

On the next day, September 23rd, the ship *Viscount* appeared to the north-westward and we took Mr. Goodwin, Master Pilot, out of her. She had left Saugor on the 21st

in tow, but the weather had become so bad while towing down the Eastern Channel that the tug had to cast off. The *Viscount* made sail and stood across the tail of the Eastern Sea Reef. Being a very smart ship she managed to survive, but they had had an anxious time beating about in Balasore Bay and had narrowly escaped disaster amongst the sands.

Shortly after we had taken Mr. Goodwin out of the *Viscount*, a small German schooner, the *Franz*, hove in sight to the north-west and Mr. Skinner, Mate Pilot, was taken out of her. He also had had a very bad time and some hairbreadth escapes.

We learnt afterwards that the centre of the cyclone had passed over False Point, accompanied by a storm-wave fifteen feet high which, after submerging and drowning everything at Hookey Tollah, the small station on the inner side of Dowdeswell Island where the Port Officer and the Customs Authorities resided, rushed inland with great velocity to a distance of about twelve miles, and the whole country thus far was completely inundated.

The loss of life on shore was appalling, being by the official estimate nearly 5,000. At False Point the Port Officer, Mr. Douglas, together with his wife and four children were drowned, the body of Mr. Douglas being found under some bushes some way inland. Of the Customs Authorities all were drowned save two.

The barque *Tewkesbury*, lying at False Point, lost the master, boatswain and four of the crew, washed overboard by the storm wave. All the buildings at Hookey Tollah were washed away except the refuge house, which with a few coconut trees were the only objects left standing.

The aspect of the whole of the harbour had changed so completely that the place could hardly be recognised when the British India Steamer *Goa* entered the harbour shortly after the storm.

The tug which had towed the *Viscount* to sea had been able to get back again to Saugor and was more fortunate

than the tug *Retriever* in the cyclone of May, 1887, which after towing the ship *Godiva* to sea was lost with all hands except one fireman. The ship *Godiva* left Garden Reach on the morning of May 23rd, 1887, in tow of the *Retriever* and in pilotage charge of Mr. Newby T. Wawn. They anchored at Saugor on May 24th. On the morning of the 25th, when the tug came ahead to pass hawsers, Captain Hamer, who commanded her, remarked that he did not like the look of the weather; but Mr. Wawn decided to proceed as the glass was standing at 29.50 which was not a very low reading for the time of the year. They took in tow and left Saugor at 7 a.m., passing the Lower Gasper at 10.30 by which time the wind had increased to gale force from east-north-east and the glass was falling rapidly. At 12.15 the tug was cast off and the *Godiva* stood down south under lower top-sails. The glass was then standing at 29.10. There was a high sea running and it was blowing hard from the east-north-east. The *Retriever* stood over to the eastward and was soon lost to sight from the ship in the blinding rain. That night the centre of a cyclone swept over the Sand-heads. The *Godiva* weathered it safely, made the station again the following day, and discharged her pilot, Mr. Wawn. Of what happened to the *Retriever* after casting off the *Godiva* and standing to the eastward the only account is that given by a fireman, the sole survivor, who was picked up by the inward-bound P. & O. steamer *Nepaul* on the morning of the 26th when making the Pilot Station.

When they sighted the man he was clinging to a plank, and the weather being too bad to permit of a boat being lowered, they had to manœuvre into position to drift down on him, then a lascar was lowered with a rope and succeeded in getting him on board. So bad was the weather at the time that while turning round to pick him up they lost sight of him during a heavy squall and made sure that he was gone. But when the squall had passed they sighted him again, and watched him and his plank being rolled over and over by the breaking seas, and were filled with

wonder at his extraordinary tenacity and endurance. Their astonishment was increased when they learnt that he had been buffeted in like manner for many hours.

When he had sufficiently recovered to give an account of his experiences they gathered that the *Retriever's* engines had been kept going until past midnight of the 25th, when the engine-room skylight was smashed by a heavy sea which filled the engine-room and extinguished the fires. She became unmanageable, gradually filled, and went down with all hands except the fireman. I was told that he was a small, weakly-looking man, not at all the sort of person to stand much knocking about, but he must have possessed marvellous powers of endurance and great vitality. Forty-two people were lost with the *Retriever*, six Europeans and thirty-six Indians. These were the master, the mate, three engineers and one passenger, eighteen deck hands, and the same number employed in the engine-room. Captain Hamer was a very skilful tug master, one of the smartest among a smart body of men, and he was much regretted by the pilots—as was also the tug. It was replaced by another and more powerful *Retriever* to deal with the larger and heavier sailing vessels then coming to the port.

After coming to anchor at Kulpee or Mud Point, the pilot and leadsman of a ship would sometimes be invited to dine on board the tug, which would probably have put the net over as soon as her anchor was down, and caught a supply of fresh chingrees or bumalo. I recall one such occasion on the first *Retriever* and listening with great interest to Captain Hamer's account of a fight he had had with Chinese pirates, when in command of one of the opium brigs which used to ply between Calcutta and the far East. A tuft of black hair hanging from a nail in his cabin was a souvenir of the combat.

The pilot of the *Godiva*, Mr. Newby T. Wawn, was a stout fellow in every sense of the word. He was quite the heaviest man in the Service. I do not know how much he weighed, but he must have been well over twenty stone.

Like the majority of fat men he was placid and amiable. Having spent a great many years on the river without proceeding on leave to Europe, he decided soon after the loss of the *Retriever* to take a rest and renew his acquaintance with the Old Country. There was no difficulty in obtaining leave or securing a passage; but he was faced with the serious problem of lacing up his boots. He had not seen his feet for many years. He knew that they were there, because he could see their reflection in his looking-



MR. NEWBY WAWN

glass, but he was unable to reach them, and they had to be attended to by Abdul, his faithful ship's boy, who dried them after the morning bath, and put them into socks and shoes, which he removed again in the evening when his master retired to rest.

After careful consideration, Mr Wawn decided that Abdul would have to go to England with him, and accompanied by Mrs. Wawn and the faithful Abdul he took his

departure. When he reappeared, after an absence of more than twenty years, in his native village, his unusual proportions excited much interest among the juvenile population, who followed him about with awe and wonderment when he took his walks abroad. Abdul, who was a good-looking lad, claimed almost as much attention from the girls of the village, who swarmed round him (according to Mr. Wawn) like flies round a pot of jam, and it became necessary to ship him back to Calcutta, much to his master's regret. Mr. Wawn's feet then became the care of Mrs. Wawn, until they returned to Calcutta.

In spite of his size and weight Mr. Wawn managed to climb in and out of the boat and up the ladders of inward-bound ships and steamers with remarkable agility. I recollect, however, that on one occasion he had a nasty fall when trying to climb on board the B.I.S.N. Company's S.S. *Manora*. It was in the evening and dark, the *Manora* lay to on our weather quarter, and we saw the boat reach her. A few minutes afterwards her captain hailed us through his megaphone that Mr. Wawn had fallen into the boat and was injured, and would we send another pilot. As soon as the boat got back to our gangway we all helped to hoist the injured man on board. It was no easy task, but at last we landed him on the rail and then carried him to one of the settees. His eyes were closed and he lay quite motionless. Mr. Bellew, who had helped to carry him, said sadly, "I think he's gone." I said, "Would you like a little whisky, Newby?"

His eyelids trembled, and he murmured, "Not too much soda," and we knew that we had not lost him.

He declared that the manropes were greasy and slipped through his hands. In falling he had landed on the *secunny*, who really was very badly damaged.

CHAPTER XII

Scenting a tow—On the Chittagong run—A leg of pork—The James and Mary shoal—The loss of the *Swallow*—Loss of the *Mahratta*—Turkeys from Chittagong.

AFTER going through the False Point cyclone I was put on board the barque *Cynosure* at 10.30 on September 24th. I see from the pocket-book that the captain's name was Semple and that she was drawing fourteen feet. We sailed into Saugor and anchored. This vessel was bringing a cargo of horses from Australia, and as was usual with such a cargo there were windsails rigged over each hatch to send a current of air down below.

As we sailed through the Gasper Channel I sighted a sailing vessel hull down to the westward. I had never before seen a sailing ship in such a position, for the Western Channel had not been used in my time or indeed for many years past ; so I concluded that the captain had mistaken his position and that on discovering his mistake he would haul his wind on the starboard tack and stand down again, but as we came to anchor I saw that he was standing to the westward close hauled ; evidently he had sighted us and decided to come in our direction, for he wore round and stood straight for us although between us stretched for miles the Long Sand, parts of which would be dry at low water. We could do nothing to help him for he was hull down and would not have been able to read our signals. I watched him through my glass, knowing that the course he was steering was bound to put him ashore, and when I saw the courses being clewed up and the topgallant halyards let go I knew that he had got there. The ship was the

Star of Albion with a cargo of coal. She became a total loss, but the crew were taken off.

On the following day we sighted a smoke to the northward, and as it might be a tug I had the windsails taken down so as to give nothing away, for the tug would put up the price if he knew that we had a cargo of horses which it was important to put on shore as soon as possible. It was a tug, the *Retriever*, Captain Hamer. We offered him a thousand rupees for the tow up. Before replying Hamer steamed right round us and as he passed to leeward and the pungent odour of the stable struck his nostrils he cried out, "You've got horses aboard." It was useless to deny the fact, and the barque had to pay accordingly. We could not make a start that day, so Hamer said that he would go and have a look at the ship ashore on the western edge of the Long Sand. He had to make a long detour to get to her, and when he came ahead next morning told me that the captain of the ship would not engage him.

In the following year (1886) I became special pilot for the little Chittagong mail steamers. This meant taking the steamer down the Hooghly and going on with her across the head of the Bay of Bengal to Chittagong and there awaiting the return steamer, which I took up to Calcutta where I stayed until the next mail steamer left.

Chittagong is situated a few miles up the Kornafuli river and is a picturesque collection of small hills on which the bungalows of the residents are built. At that time each bungalow stood on its own hill. There was a small club where I usually stayed, but I was frequently invited to put up with one or other of the hospitable residents. The European population was small, consisting of the Commissioner, Mr. David Lyall, the Collector, Mr. Manson, the Judge, Mr. Hardinge, Magistrate, Mr. Douglas, Superintendent of Police, Mr. T. Orr, and the various gentlemen in charge of the commercial houses. They were all very friendly and sociable and I retain many happy memories of my year on the Chittagong run.

In the morning everyone went for a ride on his or her pony. After breakfast the Government officials went to their Courts or *Kutcherries* and the business men to their offices. In the afternoon tennis or racquets, followed by whist at the club until dinner. A very regular life, and a pleasant one. On one occasion, when I had to wait several days for the next steamer, I went up the river in a steam launch and stayed a couple of days with C. Murray, at that time Superintendent of Police at Rungamuttee in the Chittagong Hill Tract. Mr. C. Gairdner, head of one of the business houses, accompanied me. The morning after our arrival we went out on elephants to a snipe *jheel*, and shot for a couple of hours, Gairdner, who was a fine shot, getting most of the bag. It was in August and hot. I recollect how I enjoyed being drenched with cold water from earthenware *chatties* when we got back to the *peelkhana* where the elephants were kept.

The tea-planters of the district used to come in to the club, and were, like all tea-planters, very good fellows. I stayed with several of them at different times and very much appreciated their kindly hospitality. My visit to Mr. Higgins has perhaps impressed itself on my memory more than any other. His garden was some little distance up the Kornafuli and I had to charter a boat to get there. I took my ship boy with me—although a ‘boy,’ he was about sixty years old, and had been Mr. Smyth’s servant on the river for many years.

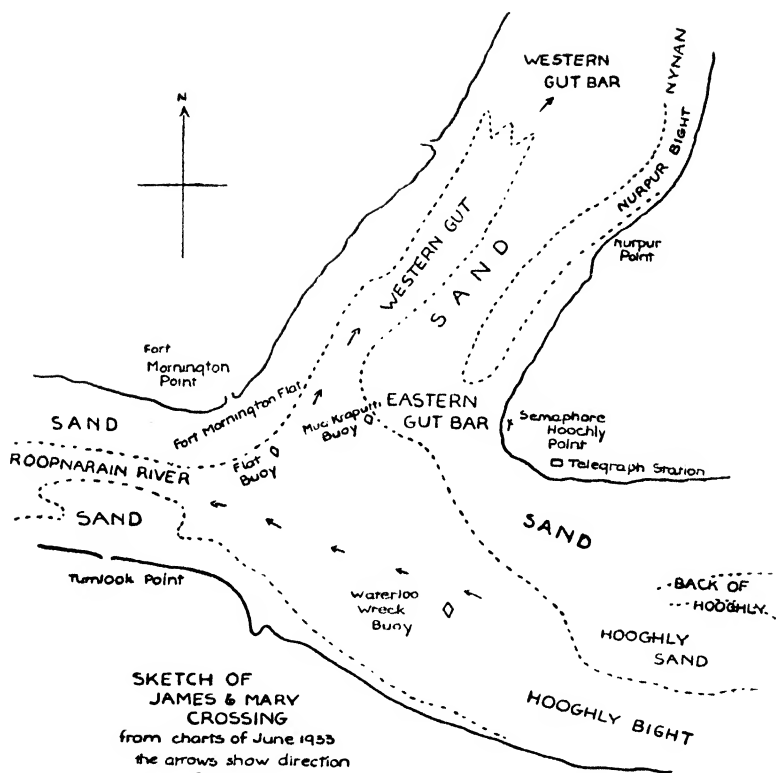
Mr. Higgins was a great *shikarry* and had I don’t know how many tigers to his credit. He organised a shoot for my benefit, and with the garden coolies beat a piece of jungle, which was expected to contain some game. Standing together in the open, Higgins suddenly whispered, “Look out! I think they’ve put a tiger up.” I looked out at once, but could not see any tree to climb, and felt quite unable to share his evident pleasure at the prospect of meeting the King of the Jungle on foot—or his disappointment when a pig came out, which he bowled over.

On leaving I was presented with a leg of pork wrapped up in some sacking. The coolies carried my things to the boat, and when the boatmen, who were Hindus, asked my old boy what was in the parcel, he replied, "*Haring*," which means 'deer.' The boatmen took his word for it and carried the bundle to the boat. The old fellow chuckled as he said in an undertone, "*Ha. Kala Haring!*" He was very pleased with himself and kept chuckling at intervals at the thought of having duped the boatmen who would not have touched a pig at any price. We had the pig cooked on the steamer on our way across the bay and I did not think very much of it.

It was during my year on the Chittagong run that I witnessed the loss of the British India Company's steamer *Mahratta* on the James and Mary shoal. This shoal derived its name from the *Royal James and Mary*, a ship which was lost there on September 24th, 1694. The account of the tragedy was conveyed to the Court of Directors in a letter from Chuttanuttee dated December 19th, 1694 :

"The *Royal James and Mary* arrived from Sumatra in August, 1694, and coming up the Hooghly she fell on a bank on this side Tumbolie Point, and was unfortunately lost, being immediately overset, and broke her back with the loss of four or five men's lives."

Tradition averred that this dangerous shoal and quicksand had been formed at a time when the river Damooda broke its banks, and instead of flowing into the Hooghly at Ooloobaria, as it had done from time immemorial, cut a fresh channel for itself across-country and came into the Hooghly again abreast of Fultah Point, some fifteen miles lower down, in close proximity to the mouth of the Roopnarain river. The silt brought down by the Damooda, and the cross-current created by its outfall caused the shoal to form. A glance at the accompanying sketch will show the positions of the eastern and western Guts of the James and Mary. The former, scoured out by the ebb tide, had always



a deeper navigable channel than the latter, which frequently shoaled up until there were only two or three feet of water there at low water.

Hauling into the eastern Gut when bound up on a strong flood tide entailed a certain amount of risk. There was the chance of being set on to the Muckraputti Lumps, which meant disaster, or of taking a violent sheer when passing from the strong flood into the slack tide under Hooghly Point, which might result in the vessel grounding on the Point.

A sailing vessel coming up through the eastern Gut on a flood tide under sail, with a south-west wind, would always have her head yards braced sharp up on the port tack, so that they would be flat aback if she took a run for the Point. And the same at Fultah Point a little higher up, where one also passed from a strong tide into a slack. Deep-laden vessels generally waited until the flood tide had eased before attempting to haul into the eastern Gut. The flood tide, however, set fair through the western Gut, which was quite a safe bit of navigation, provided there was sufficient rise of tide to float the vessel over the bar.

The Muckraputti Lumps are quicksand and swallow anything which comes to rest on them. Many vessels lie there, piled one on top of the other. Steam has robbed the James and Mary of much of its danger, but danger there will always be until perhaps at some future date the Damooda may again burst through its banks and flow into the Roopnarain, when conditions may possibly be altered for the better.

Commander William Lindquist, of the Hon. East India Company's Bengal Marine, Marshall, Vice Admiralty Court, Malta, has left an autobiography, in which he says : " In the month of June, 1822, I was put on board the barque *Swallow*, drawing sixteen feet of water, to take her from Balasore Roads to Calcutta. The wind was fresh and fair and I had a fine run to Diamond Harbour, where I anchored for the night. The next day, at half-flood, weighed, and

having rounded the Hooghly sand, bore away to cross the James and Mary shoal, a dangerous part of the river, which had proved the grave of many fine ships, since Admiral Watson took his squadron up the Hooghly in 1757. I was on the poop trimming sails, spy-glass in hand, about, or a little more, proud and elated than Palinurus when conducting the Argo into Colchis. The breeze had fallen light, but the tide was strong, and to avoid being carried up the Roopnarain (another branch of the river) I bore away too soon and struck on the bank called Muckraputty lump, which formed the other side of the channel, and thus by giving Charybdis too wide a berth encountered Scylla. The ship struck forward, hung a few minutes, turned right round, shot off into deep water and went down head foremost, colours flying, royals standing, and all in less time than I take to write this account of it.

“There happened to be on board as passengers a Mr. Sheridan, Quartermaster of His Majesty’s 13th Regt., his wife and six female children, and how we managed to save them has ever seemed to me a mystery. However, we did manage to get one of the quarter boats down, and the whole family with a couple of sailors into it, but they were not more than fifty yards from the ship when she sank.

“All the rest of us went down with the ship. Three men, good swimmers, struck out for the shore, but when we mustered on the bank they were missing, and must have been devoured by sharks or alligators.

“The ship went down as I have stated, and then surged up to the surface, starboard side uppermost and keel out of water. I found myself overboard in an eddy, whirling into the poop cabin windows, when I seized hold of the footropes of the spanker boom. The Captain of the ship, in the same eddy, caught hold of my legs, and trying to extricate myself from his grasp I gave him a kick in the mouth and knocked his front teeth out; but he held on notwithstanding, and so did I to the footrope, by means of which we both clambered on the wreck. A row-boat came and took

us off the wreck, landed us on the bank, and then on to Calcutta."

Commander Lindquist tells us that he was born on Christmas Day, 1800, so he was twenty-two years old when the *Swallow* was lost. He mentions that when he joined the Pilot Service there were twelve brigs and a hundred and fifty officers of various grades. On joining the Service he was attached to the brig *Cecilia*. Two of his sons and two of his grandsons became pilots on the Hooghly.

To revert to the *Mahratta*. This steamer belonged to the B.I.S.N. Company and was running between Calcutta and Chandbally, a small port situated in Balasore Bay, carrying Indian passengers. There were two or three steamers on that run at the time, the best-known being the *Sir John Lawrence*. They were not piloted by members of the Bengal Pilot Service. Their commanders passed an examination on the river, and were permitted to pilot their vessels. To proceed to Chandbally they did not use the Eastern Channel but took a route of their own through the Western Channel. The *Mahratta* was piloted by Mr. Allen, who had been in charge of one of the tugs. There was a brisk passenger trade between Calcutta and Chandbally, and the steamers always looked pretty crowded.

I was bound up in the S.S. *Euphrates*, Captain Brown, on June 23rd, 1887. It was, I think, the day after the moon, perigee springs, and the flood tides were very strong. On leaving Saugor I sighted the Chandbally boat going up ahead of me and made out that she was the *Mahratta*. I had timed my departure from Saugor so as to arrive at the James and Mary with sufficient rise to admit of my using the western Gut. As we passed Diamond Harbour the *Mahratta* was about two miles ahead. With my glass I picked up the semaphore at Hooghly Point and, from the water which was showing, estimated that by the time I arrived at the western Gut there would be about two feet more than my draught. I was watching the steamer ahead

of me, and as I approached Luff Point noticed that she was going to use the eastern Gut.

Almost immediately I saw her take the ground on the Muckraputti Lumps and capsize, her funnel touching the water. We went to stations, rang the engines to stand by, and stood by the anchor, and I told the captain that I would turn round below the *Mahratta*, and take up a position from which our boats could reach her. We turned from Hooghly Bight and headed for the Waterloo Wreck buoy which was nearly under water. So strong was the rush of tide that, steaming full-speed ahead, we barely held our own. We dropped the anchor and gave her fifteen fathoms of chain, keeping the engines going half-speed ahead.

From the position we had taken up the tide set fair to the wreck, and we sent all our boats away, with orders to take all the people off the wreck, land them at Hooghly Point, and then, when they saw us turn to proceed up, they were to pull towards the middle of the river and we would pick them up while going through the western Gut. We had on board as passengers the crew of a sailing vessel who had been paid off at Chittagong and were going to Calcutta. They asked if they might help, and manned one of our boats, all of which fetched the wreck without difficulty; but I was unable to watch their proceedings, my attention being required by the steamer, which kept sheering about in the strong tide and eddies and I had to use the engines and helm to keep her in position.

Three other inward-bound steamers came up and turned round to render assistance, but on finding that our boats had rescued all the people turned again and went on their way through the western Gut. Among them was the S.S. *Arcot*, another B.I.S.N. Company steamer, who lowered one of her boats and sent it away to the *Mahratta*, and when later on we picked up our boats as arranged we also picked up the *Arcot's* boat and hoisted it up under one of ours. The chief officer of the *Mahratta* was H. S. Brown, who was

on the *Worcester* with me. He was always known afterwards as Muckraputti Brown. He commanded several of the B.I.S.N. Company's steamers and became Port Officer at Madras, where I met him when homeward-bound on retiring in 1913.

The *Arcot*, which had turned to render assistance and had left one of her boats behind, was lost at the same place a few months after, as she was hauling into the eastern Gut. Her steering gear went wrong and she piled up on top of the wreck of the *Mahratta*. In her case there was no loss of life, but a number of the people on the *Mahratta* were drowned. We took off about a hundred and twenty of them.

Amongst other vessels lost on the James and Mary were the *S.S. City of Canterbury* on January 17th, 1897, and the *Overdale* on July 3rd, 1897.

While on the Chittagong run I was frequently commissioned by my friends there to bring them things from Calcutta. The ladies would want articles of millinery, and the men would ask me to procure something or other which was not to be bought in Chittagong, where shops were not too well stocked. On one trip I became very unpopular on the steamer because of a rather strong gorgonzola cheese which I was conveying to a friend who had a craving for that particular delicacy. The weather was hot, and the gorgonzola in addition to the ordinary smells of the steamer was rather too much for some of the seasick passengers, of whom we generally had a few; for it was a rough passage across the head of the Bay in the south-west monsoon, and the vessels were small and lively.

The cheese was carried on deck and slung to the awning boom. Once when we were carrying a large crowd of Indian passengers in the 'tweendecks we encountered unusually heavy weather on the journey to Chittagong. We shipped quite a lot of water and the hatches had to be battened down. I felt sorry for the people cooped up in the hot and stuffy 'tweendecks. It was bad luck that we

were also carrying several jars of eggs in the same part of the ship, and that the lashings carrying away, the jars got smashed and the eggs mixed up with the passengers. When the hatches were opened on arrival at the mouth of the Kornafuli, the 'tweendecks contained an omelette of the most horrible description.

There was brisk competition at that time between the B.I. Company's steamers and those of the Asiatic S.N. Company. They each offered inducements to the Indian passengers to ship with them, gradually lowering their passenger rates one against the other. They kept on reducing their rates, until at last the Asiatic offered to take passengers from Chittagong to Calcutta for nothing. The B.I. capped this by not only taking them for nothing but by giving each passenger a bonus, in the shape of a chicken, which was handed to him as he boarded the steamer. The story ran that the Asiatic Company's agent telegraphed to the head office at Calcutta, "B.I. giving fowl; shall I offer turkey?" But this was refused as being too expensive.

Turkeys did well at Chittagong and I was asked by one of the Senior Pilots to get a couple for him at Christmas. The Port Officer's wife very kindly promised to get two for me, and to send them on board the steamer before it sailed. I was staying with the Superintendent of Police that trip, and after dinner joined the steamer, which was leaving the next morning. They told me that a coop with two turkeys had come on board for me. In the morning I had a look at them and saw that they were two nice birds, but not so nice as another pair which had been brought on board by one of the passengers, a Mr. Mac something. His were very fine birds indeed, and I remarked to the captain what beauties they were and much bigger than mine. The captain did not like Mr. Mac, and said:

"You tip the *topas* and ask him to feed your birds well. I should not be surprised if they put on a lot of weight between this and Calcutta."

He also remarked that Mr. Mac being very stingy, would

probably not tip the *topas* properly, and that his birds in consequence would suffer from neglect. I did as he suggested, and told the *topas*, who looked after the livestock, that he would get a rupee if he took good care of my turkeys.

On arrival at Calcutta I was surprised to see how the birds which were in the coop labelled with my name had improved, while the pair at which Mr. Mac was looking gloomily had certainly gone off. He seemed to be a rather cross-grained and suspicious sort of person, and grumbled at the *topas* for not feeding them up better. He even suggested that the birds had been changed, at which the *topas* was very indignant, as was also the captain, to whom he confided his suspicions.

But there was no blessing on those birds. The friend for whom I had executed the commission was very pleased with them and told me that his man was extremely clever at fattening turkeys by pushing balls of meal down their throats. He must have overdone it on this occasion. Two days before the anniversary on which they were to grace the board the faithful fellow, with tears in his eyes, broke the sad news to his master that they had both died.

That night there was feasting and joy in the servants' quarters. It was not known whether they were feasting on turkey or holding revels on the proceeds of their sale.

CHAPTER XIII

The Harbour Masters and their work—Rocco the Maltese—His skill—Harvey the West Indian—His star turn—Short life of Harbour Masters.

I HAVE made mention several times of the Harbour Masters to whom the pilot handed over his vessel on arrival at Garden Reach, or from whom he took over charge when leaving to go down the river. These men were specialists and wonderfully expert at their job. I propose to devote this chapter to an account of the work of the Harbour Masters.

Of all the people who travel by sea, how many give a thought to the men who handle the vessels in port? They realise to some extent the work of the captain. They know that by his skilful navigation the ship is conducted from one part of the globe to another, that it is owing to his care that she avoids rocks, ice, or collision with other craft, that his knowledge of the law of storms will enable her to escape the danger zone of a typhoon, that the comfort of all on board, as well as their safety, will depend in a great measure on the way in which he commands his vessel.

But the voyage over, and the landfall successfully made, he hands over the navigation of the ship to another man who possesses special knowledge of the channels and local conditions of tide or current—the Pilot. On the Hooghly the pilot in his turn hands the vessel over to the Harbour Master on arriving at Garden Reach. The passengers, if any are carried, are naturally too busy collecting their belongings and dealing with the Customs officials to notice the delicate precision with which the artist who is now in charge of the proceedings will wend his way between buoys,

or between other vessels, lay his craft alongside a jetty, or take her through a dock which is almost a tight fit, without rubbing any of her paint off. Such skill is not acquired easily, or in a day ; but given natural aptitude and nerve to start with, continual practice at the same work day after day will develop a nicety of judgment and a correctness of eye little short of miraculous to the spectator who is competent to appreciate it.

In the Port of Calcutta the shipping was handled without any aid from tug-boats, the only motive power in the case of sailing vessels being the tide and the muscles of the crew. The pilot of an inward-bound ship in tow would time it to arrive in Garden Reach with the ebb just making down. The Harbour Master would come off in his heavy, red-painted boat, decked over, and with a cabin for shelter. It was manned by a sturdy-looking crew of boatmen. Having relieved the pilot, he would continue to tow up until he was abreast of the tier of shipping which the newcomer was to join. The tug was then cast off, and the anchor dropped under foot ; a line would be run to a buoy ahead, and the vessel sheered over until she was above the berth which she was to occupy, when she would be dropped down with the tide into position between the mooring buoys and held there with lines until, with the help of the ' heave-up ' boat, the cables would be shackled to the buoys, two ahead and two astern.

There she would remain until discharged, reloaded, and ready for sea again, when the Harbour Master would reappear to unmoor her, drop her into the opening below, sheer her out into the stream, and drop her down to Garden Reach as described in my account of the *Knight of the Thistle*.

Vessels were moored head downstream at the beginning of the south-west monsoon, when the flood tide during perigee springs came in with a bore, or tidal wave, which might reach a height of seven feet. It was safer for the ship to meet such a wave bows on.

Steamers on arrival would proceed up to the jetties and be placed alongside one of them if there was a vacancy. If not, they would be placed in the moorings off the jetties and await their turn to go alongside. On leaving, the Harbour Master would take them out into the stream, and back them stern first down to Garden Reach.

In 1878 the men who were most highly considered were Day, Rocco and Lockhart, and of these the one I admired most was Rocco. He was a Maltese, a small man with grey whiskers, who looked about fifty years of age. He always spoke very quietly and very slowly, and I could not imagine him showing emotion under any circumstances. To watch him extract a large steamer—as steamers went in those days—from alongside the jetty, take her through the moorings, and back her down past the shipping, always at the right angle and in the right position, until with a minimum expenditure of energy and no waste of time she arrived at Garden Reach, was an object lesson in efficiency. But he would brook no interference, and resented criticism from the ignorant.

Once when backing down a large passenger steamer, leaning over the bridge rail, thoughtfully watching a mooring buoy under his stern, which looked as though it must inevitably be struck and sunk by the vessel, but which he knew, from his knowledge of the set of the tide at that particular spot, would as a matter of fact pass alongside some two or three yards away, the captain foolishly remarked, “You will be on top of that buoy if you don’t look out.” Rocco softly replied in his usual drawl, “Do you think so, Captain? Oh, no,” and to show what he could do, proceeded to turn the steamer round head down. He then turned her head up again, and again repeated the manoeuvre, although the channel was very little wider than the length of the vessel.

The Harbour Masters were of all nationalities. Besides Rocco the Maltese there were Schneider, a Dutchman, Matthieson, a Swede or Dane, and Harvey, a West Indian,

and when it came to handling a sailing vessel the majority of the skippers would have given the palm to Harvey. His star turn without a doubt was when he took over charge in Garden Reach of a laden barque, which had been sailed up by the pilot from Saugor. The ebb was just making down and Harvey proceeded to sail her up to the moorings off Prinseps Ghat where she was to be berthed. Instead of merely taking in and furling sail, he sent the men aloft to cut them adrift and send them down as they were taken in, starting with the mainsail and topgallantsails, and then did the same with the upper topsails, sailing up under the lower topsails and foresail until he was abreast of the opening below the berth which he was making for. He then steered across the tide to the berth and sailed her up into it, cutting the remaining sails away as required to reduce her speed, and as the lower foretopsail came down on deck she was in position to run the lines to the buoys and make fast, and all this without any unnecessary fuss or noise. He was a spare-built man, slightly above the middle height, dark-complexioned, and with very blue eyes.

The life of the Harbour Master was a strenuous one, much of the work being done at night. They seemed to wear out very quickly, and few of them made old bones. They had not the advantage which we enjoyed of spending most of our time at sea in fresh air. During my service I saw many good men drop out and fresh men join. The general standard of work was always at a high level.

Conditions are different now. Sailing vessels are no more and the work is all steam. The steamers are larger, and presumably will keep on getting larger still, but I have not the least doubt that the Harbour Masters of the present day are just as expert as they ever were, owing to the constant practice which makes perfection.

CHAPTER XIV

Windjammers and their crews—Brocklebanks' ships—Others not so good—Bad food—A crew in irons—"Shanghai-ing"—The runners' coups—A much-married captain—The '91 cyclone and the loss of the *Coleroon*.

AFTER a year on the Chittagong run I became a Junior Master Pilot and took my turn again with the other men of my grade on the river. Conditions had changed considerably since I joined the Service in 1878. Most of the work was still sail, but the ships had become very much larger, and so had the tugs which had to handle them. In place of the paddle steamers *Court Hey*, *Hunsdon*, *Challenge*, and *Defiance*, belonging to Messrs. Gladstone Wylie, there were the powerful twin-screw boats *Clive*, *Warren Hastings*, and *Dalhousie*. Messrs. Turner Morrison had replaced the first *Retriever* by another more powerful boat of the same name and another twin-screw boat, the *Rescue*.

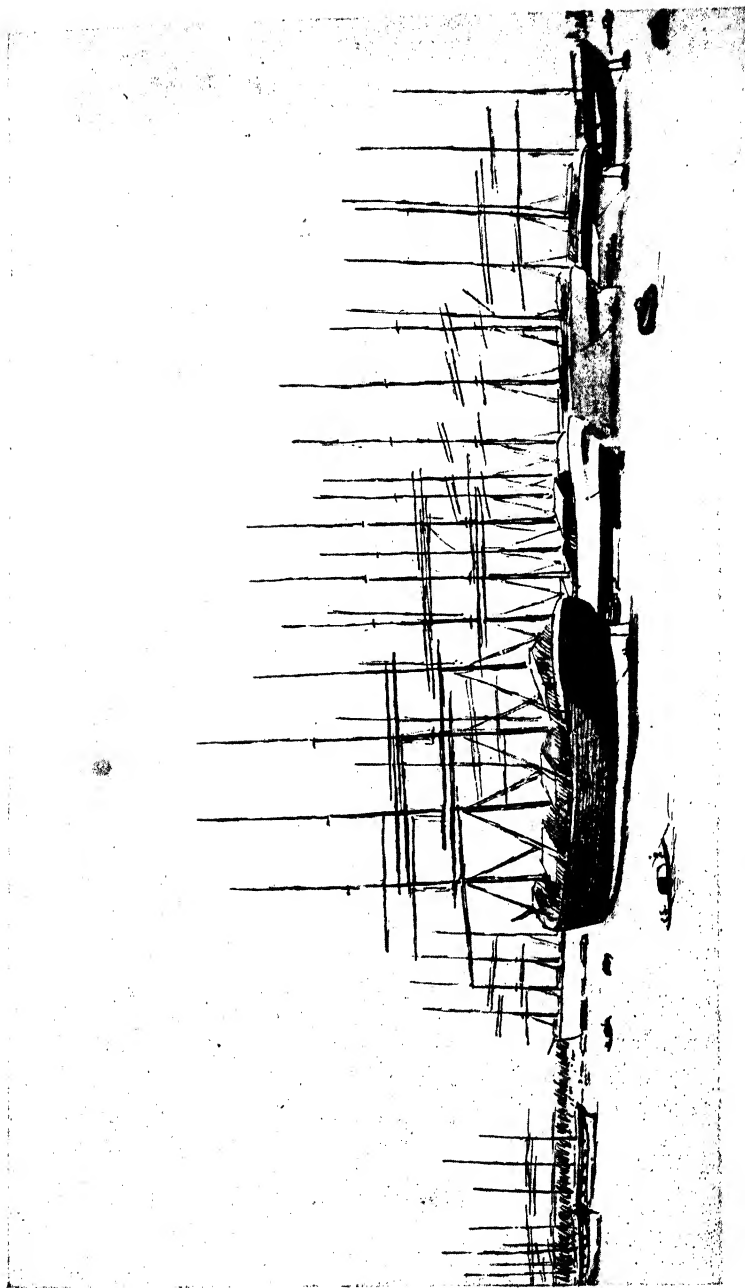
Sailing ships of one thousand tons were now considered small vessels, while ships of twice that size had become quite common. They were built to carry rather than for speed, had flat bottoms, or very little rise of floor. Many of them were four-masted. The illustration overpage gives a good idea of the class of vessels lying in the port of Calcutta during the late 'eighties. But the ships belonging to James Nourse which carried coolies to the West Indies were still built for speed, were heavily sparred and carried double crews.

I recall an afternoon at the Sandheads in the month of May. There was a fresh breeze from the south-west and the weather was very hazy. Three steamers came in, fairly close together, and were supplied with pilots. As the boat

was returning from the third steamer a sailing vessel appeared out of the mist. She was one of Nourse's vessels, the *Allanshaw*, commanded by Captain J. Ferry, and I was sent off to her. We squared away and with everything set soon overhauled first one steamer and then another until we had passed all three of them, and were in at Saugor, anchor down and all sails furled, before any of them reached the anchorage.

On another occasion, some years later, I had an experience with one of the large four-masted vessels, the *Holkar*, belonging to Brocklebanks, commanded by Captain Peterkin. She was above the tonnage of my grade and was really a Branch Pilot's vessel, so that when she was sighted I did not feel interested in her; but the Branch Pilots on the Station did not want her and offered her to me. As she was nice and deep I naturally jumped at the offer. When we were about half-way through the Eastern Channel, the wind came round to west-south-west which made it rather tight for the course through the Gasper, so we hugged the western side of the channel and passed well to windward of the Lower Gasper Light. We were drawing twenty-four feet six inches. We kept close to the wind and passed just to leeward of the Upper Gasper, but on a wind she was a different proposition from a vessel like the *Allanshaw*, being flat-bottomed like a barge and making a lot of leeway when close hauled. I saw it was going to be a toss-up whether we weathered the Middleton Spit buoy or not, so kept her a point free, passed the buoy on the wrong side, and had what the French called *un mauvais quart d'heure*; but we found sufficient water and were soon at anchor in Saugor Roads.

Brocklebanks' ships were always well found and there were a nice lot of men in command of them. For that matter the majority of the men commanding the wind-jammers were very likeable. They were usually big men and inclined to be stout, from lack of exercise. The mate was generally a lean man, in hard condition, from being continually on the move and using his muscles; but when



PORT OF CALCUTTA IN THE "EIGHTIES"

he became skipper his physical occupation was gone. He now led a life of dignified repose and ease. *He could sleep* whenever he chose, there was no watch to keep, and nothing to prevent him putting on flesh. It is true that he had increased responsibility, many anxious hours and sleepless nights ; but there was nothing to keep him lean. He was an absolute autocrat during the three or four months that the voyage lasted. His word was law.

The men who composed the crews were not always easy to govern, being often a job lot of all nationalities ; sometimes one watch would be all negroes. Frequently among the crew there would be one or two men anxious to give trouble and stir up disaffection. Occasionally such agitators succeeded in upsetting the others before the voyage commenced. The men would have come on board with sore heads and their digestions out of order, suffering from the poisonous liquor with which they had been served in the boarding-houses whence they had been collected ; they had been swindled out of their hard-earned money, and were suffering from a sense of ill-treatment. Under such conditions it was easy to persuade them that the ship was all wrong, the food bad, and the captain and officers objectionable. Aft they would tramp in a body to say that they had decided not to sail in her.

The complaint was generally about the food, and sometimes they had good grounds for complaining. I remember joining a vessel which was dropping down to the Reach. As I went alongside another dinghy also arrived with meat and vegetables, which were passed up on deck. The Health Officer who was on board happened to notice the meat, which he declared was unfit for human consumption. The captain was very angry with the Indian contractor and asked him what he meant by bringing such stuff on board. The man replied, " It's not for the cabin, Sahib ; it's for the crew." The captain turned to the Health Officer and said, " That's all right, Doctor ; it's for forward ! " But the doctor had it thrown overboard and the crew dined on

salt horse. Salt horse was not always safe either, as was shown in the case of the *Crofton Hall* to which I shall come later.

As a rule when the men complained, the captain was able to persuade them to turn to, and the incident was closed. It was a nuisance when they refused duty on the way down the river. This happened to me in the case of a soft-wood North American barque the *Austriana*, Captain McIntosh.

We had passed the night at anchor at Saugor and were taking in tow to proceed to sea, when the men refused duty and said that they would not sail in the vessel. One or two of the crew were unwell, suffering from something which they had eaten, and they made that the excuse. Captain McIntosh, being unable to persuade them to carry on, decided to return to Calcutta in the tug and get a fresh crew. Left to myself, I had all the cooking utensils thoroughly cleaned, dosed the sick men with castor oil, and settled down to await patiently the return of the captain.

On the second night it blew very hard from the westward and we dragged our anchor. The men all refused to turn-to and give her more chain, although I pointed out to them that their own skins were in danger if we were driven ashore. The principal stirrer-up of discontent was an ill-favoured little Irishman, and they followed his lead like a flock of sheep. With the assistance of the mate, second mate, cook and steward, we managed to light to some more chain, and as she was still driving we let go the second anchor.

After two days the tug returned with the captain and a fresh crew, also a new third mate, a great big fellow of the 'bucko' type, and the old crew were put in irons. The orders were to return to Diamond Harbour, hand the old crew over to the police, and proceed to sea, so we took in tow and proceeded up. At Diamond Harbour the *Dak*, or post-office boat, a long, heavy boat painted red, came off with a crowd of *chowkedars* in red turbans, to collect the mutineers. When it came to the ringleader's turn to

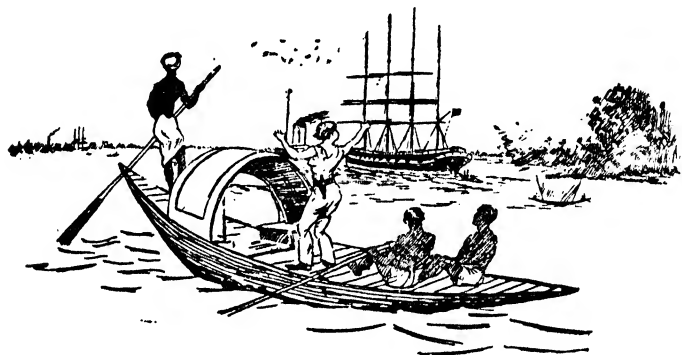
embark in the boat, he turned to the captain, who was standing on the break of the poop, and told him what he would do to him if only he were free. I said to the third mate, who was conducting the proceedings, "Take his irons off and let him have a go at the captain." But, as I anticipated, when the handcuffs were unlocked he crawled over the side and into the boat without a word. As he went down the ladder, I told him what I thought of him, which was some little relief after the delay and bother which he had caused me. To the best of my recollection they all got six weeks.

Sometimes there was a scarcity of sailors in the port, and then the boarding-house runners, whose job it was to supply a crew, would "shanghai" all sorts of people who had been so unwary as to partake of the refreshment offered by some genial stranger. The victim would be dumped unconscious on board a vessel about to depart, the boarding-house runner would get a month's advance of the man's pay as his commission, and the man, on coming to his senses, would be surprised to find himself in strange surroundings. If an old shell-back, the experience would probably have lost for him the charm of novelty, and he would settle down philosophically to make the best of things.

One morning on board an outward-bound vessel taking in tow in Garden Reach I noticed among the men walking round the capstan a small, middle-aged Eurasian, looking a picture of misery. He was obviously not a sailor, so I asked him what he was, and he told me that he was a reporter on the *Statesman*, a married man with three children, and had no idea as to how he had got on board. I took him aft to the captain to whom I pointed out that the man was a very poor specimen who would be of little use on board, and asked him to send him ashore. But the captain replied that the man completed his complement, and he could not afford to let him go.

On another vessel which was leaving, and just about to turn round in tow, the mate suddenly cried, "Where's that

fat fellow who was put on board this morning? I don't see him!" One of the crew replied that the man referred to was in his bunk. "The Hell he is," said the mate. "I'll soon have him out of that," and went down into the forecastle. There was a sound of a scuffle followed by yells, and a short fat man shot out of the forecastle, propelled by the mate's boot. It looked like a sailor clad in blue



TELLING THEM WHAT SHE THOUGHT ABOUT IT

dungarees and properly equipped with belt and sheath-knife, but the shrieks were pitched in a high falsetto, such as is only heard on Arab vessels, which include neuters among the crew. The runners had once again scored a bull, to the intense annoyance of the captain who was now a man short. A dinghy was hailed and into it was bundled the lady, who expressed her opinion of the ship, the captain, the mate, and everything generally in a mixture of broken English, German and Hindustani.

One night as I entered Monk's Hotel, accompanied by a ship captain who was sailing the following morning, a runner accosted the latter with an enquiry as to whether he wanted any more men, because if he did want another man, there was Mr. MacQ—— upstairs whom he could put on

board during the night. Mr. MacQ——, who had served for a time on the brigs as mate, and afterwards on the light-ships, was sitting at a small table with a friend, innocently enjoying a whisky and soda and all unconscious of the interest taken in him by the gentleman downstairs.

I think it was generally agreed that the runners performed their star turn when they shanghaied a policeman, who on discovering what had happened to him appealed to the pilot who was taking the ship down, and who after satisfying himself as to the man's *bona fides* took him with him on board the brig, whence he was sent in the first inward-bound steamer to rejoin the force.

The ease with which the sailorman was duped, robbed and sold was always a surprise to me. He would arrive in port as fit as a fiddle, with two or three months' wages to draw, would take his discharge, get his money and decide to have a good time. The good time might possibly last forty-eight hours, and he would wake up on board a strange vessel, without any kit, or with very little, and his first month's wages taken in advance by the rascal who had sold him. When taking down an outward-bound ship I once recognised a man, although much altered in appearance and the worse for wear, who when questioned admitted that he had been one of the crew of a ship which I had taken up a few days before. Sometimes a skipper would complain of having been badly done by some artful runner, and might perhaps point to some venerable patriarch, with white locks, a husky cough and a general appearance of senile decay, who had been put on board at Valparaiso, Callao or 'Frisco, dyed and made up to represent a stout fellow in the forties.

On one ship which arrived from Australia the captain was very sick at having been planted with an imbecile of most objectionable habits, when leaving London for Australia with emigrants. The man had been a continual source of trouble, and it had been necessary to keep him locked up most of the time. He had been unable to get

rid of the man at Melbourne and the same at Sydney, where they had gone to load for Calcutta. I do not know whether he was more successful there, as I did not take the vessel down, but possibly the runners may have helped him.

One of the most unusual crews was that of the *Helen Pembroke*. They were all Welsh. The officers and steward were sons of the captain. They spoke Welsh together all the time, and seemed quite a happy family. She was a fine vessel, well found and well kept up.

A ship which regularly sailed to Calcutta, and was named after one of the royal parks, was commanded by a man who emulated the great Tudor monarch in his matrimonial ventures, having been married no less than six times. I never took him up the river myself, but a pilot who had done so told us that after anchoring at Saugor the much-married mariner produced an album with photos of all the ladies, but seemed to have difficulty in identifying one or two of them. "Yes," he said, pointing to one of them; "that was Jane, a most lovable creature"; but after scrutinising it closely he corrected himself and exclaimed, "No, by Jove, it's Eliza." He had buried two of them in the cemetery at Calcutta, and every Sunday would make a pilgrimage to their graves, carrying a couple of bouquets.

In November, 1891, it was my fortune to go through the cyclone in which the pilot vessel *Coleroon* was lost with all hands. She was doing duty as buoy brig at the time and on arriving at the Sandheads I was taken out by her. The weather was easterly but we were into November and were looking forward to the north-east monsoon. The glass had been falling for a day or two, but the general appearance of things was not too bad, and both the brigs had anchored north-west of the Light. Mr. J. T. Broadhead was in command of the *Coleroon*, and young Reddie, son of Mr. Reddie with whom I hove my first lead down the river, was mate. The Medical Officer, Mr. Mullens, was also on board.

He was rather a favourite with the younger members of the Service, who had nicknamed him Kobi Raj.

The morning after I had been taken out I was transferred to the *Fame*, which was doing duty as cruiser and putting pilots on board inward-bound vessels. I was the last pilot to be transferred from one brig to the other and I left behind me on the *Coleroon* F. L. Puttock and A. W. J. Turner.

The weather had now changed for the worse, and we got a succession of hard, easterly squalls with rain. In the



MR. J. T. BROADHEAD

afternoon an Arab ship made the station, but we were unable to supply her with a pilot as the boat could not have fetched back if we had sent it away. The China mail steamer S.S. *Japan* managed to get a pilot from the *Coleroon* and we learnt afterwards that Turner had been sent to her. The position now was very similar to that in the cyclone of 1885 except that we were lying more to the northward than the *Cassandra* on that occasion.

Towards evening the wind came more from the northward and the squalls became more violent. We were riding to a long scope of chain and making very heavy weather of it. We hoped to be able to ride it out, but shortly after dusk we parted, slipped what chain we had out, sheeted home the lower topsails, and stood away south to get clear of the tails of the sands. A big sea had got up into which we plunged heavily. We clewed up the lower

topsails and only kept the fore staysail set. The men, accompanied by the mate, Mr. Brederick, attempted to go aloft to furl the sails, but it was all they could do to hold on and keep themselves from being blown overboard, so Mr. Collingwood very wisely called them down from aloft. It was well he had done so, for they were hardly down on deck before there was a cry from forward that the bobstay had carried away. With the next dive we made the bowsprit went, and almost immediately afterwards the foremast broke short off and went over the side.

One of the men had been hurt when the foremast went. The doctor was on the other brig, and we decided that the man had broken one or two ribs, so we put a tight bandage round his chest. Nobody saw the mainmast go : the brig was lying right down to it, with her lee rail in the water, and we were all sheltering under the weather rail right aft when it went, about ten feet above the deck. We did not even hear it go, the noise of the wind and sea drowned all other sounds. The hatches were on and battened down, but we kept the hatch of the companion leading to the 'tweendecks open, as it opened towards the starboard or lee side. My servant made his way on deck and told me that there was water in the 'tweendecks. I went down and saw that it was only some water which had found its way below from the upper deck, and that she was quite sound, though how long she would remain so it was impossible to say, for with the send of each heavy sea we pounded away on top of our spars, which had all gone over the side and were lying under the brig's bottom.

It was obviously of the first importance to get clear of our wreckage as soon as possible, and several of us started at once cutting through the lanyards of the shrouds and backstays. As in the 1885 cyclone the *serang*, *tyndals* and two or three of the men worked very well, as also did my servant, who got the other servants to bale the water in the 'tweendecks into buckets, pass it up the companion, and empty it on deck, and when they had done that he worked

with me at clearing away the rigging. The main and fore-stays being set up on end, and seized with wire, gave most trouble ; but before daylight came in we had cleared away most of the gear of the fore and mainmast.

Mr. Jones, who was on board, had a new aneroid which he kept going below to consult. He hailed me to come and have a look at it. I found him standing in the companion with the instrument in his hand. It had gone down to 28.20 and he was very proud of its performance. But in going below to put it away in his chest he slipped and had a bad fall. His servant asked me to come to him, and I found that he had a deep cut at the back of his head, which I bandaged, and advised him to lie down. It was surprising that more of us were not damaged. Besides all our spars coming down, the port quarter-boat was blown inboard half-way across the quarter deck, where we lashed it.

As the daylight came in, the weather moderated. We were rolling about in the heavy swell left by the cyclone. Everything had been cut away except the head gear, which served as a sea anchor to which we were riding, and which kept us head-on to the sea. We cut that all away and were proceeding to rig up a jury-mast with the awning boom. The topgallant yards had been sent down and were lying on deck, and we intended to cross the awning boom with one of them, set the topgallant sail, and try to run back by means of it to the station—a fairly forlorn hope as there was not much chance of our getting a southerly wind.

While we were busily engaged with this, we sighted a German steamer inward-bound who gave us our position as forty miles south-west of the Eastern Channel Light. We arranged that she should tow us back to the Pilot Station, the bill for towage to be settled by the Government, and sent Mr. Anderson, Branch Pilot, off to her in the star-board quarter-boat. The boat brought back a line, to which we made fast our hawser, which they hove on board,

and we were soon on our way home, very glad to have come through so well.

We wondered what had happened to the *Coleroon*, and whether she would get back to the station and supply all the inward bound vessels before we could do so. As we neared our ground we sighted a two-masted square-rigged craft and made sure it was the *Coleroon*, but it proved to be one of Nourse's coolie ships, the *Lena*, which had lost her foremast. We anchored west-north-west of the Light and the German steamer proceeded up-channel. I forget what she was paid for the tow, but it was something quite substantial.

As we were towing back, Mr. Jones' servant called me and I found that his master's bandage had worked loose with the motion of the brig while he was sleeping, and he had lost a lot of blood. I fixed him up again and made a better job of it. He insisted on taking his turn, when a steamer came in for him, and went off in the boat with his cap perched on a regular turban of bandage.

As the *Coleroon* did not turn up we concluded that, like ourselves, she had been dismasted. A steamer was sent to search for her and after hunting for a couple of days came across some wreckage which was undoubtedly hers. It consisted of one or two of her quarter-deck settees and some of her lifebuoys, mingled with the wreckage of the Arab ship which had been close to us while at anchor at the beginning of the blow. There was nobody left to tell the tale of how or why she foundered, and it is possible that she and the Arab may have been in collision. They had evidently had time to cast off the deck lashings of the settees, and some of them may have floated on these for a while. We were sorry to lose Puttock, young Reddie, Broadhead, Adly the second mate, Mullens and a number of good sailormen. In St. Paul's Cathedral, Calcutta, there is a stone tablet to their memory.

We were now a brig short, and the *Fame* was a hulk which had to go up to be refitted as soon as possible. The steamer

Guide did duty as a pilot vessel until the *Sarsuti* was ready for sea. The *Coleroon* was replaced after a time by another composite brig the *Alice*, built at Bombay. She was also unlucky, for she caught fire and was burnt at the Sandheads. Fortunately it was fine weather at the time, and only one man was lost.

CHAPTER XV

The river boats—Wildfowl shooting—A lady wildfowler—The bank manager's crocodile—*Elefant wurst*—Animal cargoes—The testy captain and the escaped tiger—Dinghy *wallahs*—Vaccination and strikes—A boat upset.

DIFFERENT ports evolve different types of boat. At Colombo and round the coast of Ceylon one sees the *catamaran*, a narrow boat with an outrigger to balance it. At Madras there is the *masullah* boat, constructed to stand the shock of being hurled on to the beach by the heavy surf which always seems to be rolling in there. Nails are not used in building it, the planking being sewn together with coir or coconut fibre. At Chittagong the *sampan*, the boat of the Far East, makes its appearance. But the boat which has been evolved on the Hooghly, whether large or small, has one distinctive feature—a high stern. This is to enable it to cope successfully with the tidal bore which occurs there at certain seasons. As the bore travels up the river with the first of the flood tide, the boatmen can be heard miles away crying out a warning, and all the river craft lying alongside the bank push off into midstream and present their sterns to the approaching wave. After the danger has passed, they tie up again. The large *bhurs*, the *budgerows*, *bholios*, *pansways*, and dinghys, all have a family likeness in that their sterns are suited to meet and ride over an approaching wave.

The boats used by the fishermen are not built with a high stern, neither are the boats of the towboat *wallahs* or native leadsmen, whom we always used to employ in the sailing ships to run the lines to the tug when passing hawsers, and

to keep the lead going all the time when under way. They were most expert boatmen and leadsmen—small, dark men of the fisherman class. They looked to the pilots for their employment, and would swarm round us at the entrance to the Port Office, telling us what ships were leaving and asking us to take them. On leaving the house in the early morning for a stroll, before the sun got up, one of them would be waiting at the gate, so as to be first in the field to secure a job. A towboat would have a crew of ten men and their fee was only four rupees a day, but it cost them very little for their food, and still less for their clothing, which consisted of a loincloth. They were invaluable for passing hawsers, heaving the lead, or for putting us on board an outward-bound vessel in the Reach in a strong tide. Sometimes they were useful in other ways.

Shortly after joining the Service I was heaving the lead down in a ship in tow of one of the paddle tugs, from which a man fell overboard as we were passing Fultah. We had a towboat astern, and the pilot gave me permission to take the boat and pick the man up, telling me to rejoin him at Diamond Harbour, where he intended to anchor. I dropped into the boat, and having picked up the man, pulled alongside the bank to get into the slack, as the flood was still running. The man would not say what he was, or how he had got into the water, but suddenly, when we were close to the bank, jumped overboard and swam ashore. We beached the boat and went after him, up over the top of the *bund*, down the other side, and through the ditch, which had several feet of water in it. He ran across a paddy field, going well, and the towboat *wallaahs* after him like a pack of beagles. I cheered them on with a promise of eight annas to the man who caught him. This increased the pace and we got him in less than a mile, and took him back to the towboat, tied him down, and made for Diamond Harbour. There was a nice breeze, and as the tide was now making down we hoisted the sail and worked to the anchorage, where we found our vessel. The captain of the

tug was very glad to see his fireman again. There might have been all sorts of trouble about the man if we had not retrieved him.

As we passed Kokrahatti, a village on the western bank, the towboat *wallahs* told me that the place was terrorised by a band of large, grey, black-faced monkeys who had taken up their abode in a *tope* nearby. The women of the village being afraid to venture out after nightfall because of the unwelcome attentions of the animals.

I found the towboats very useful to land me on the bank when I went after wildfowl, which were plentiful on the mud flats at half-tide. I always carried a gun, even as a leadsman, and if the tide did not permit of the vessel leaving before eight or nine o'clock, would go ashore a little before daybreak and walk along the mud flats as the day came in. The air would be full of the cries of all sorts of birds picking up food on the mud—sandpipers, red shanks, green shanks, godwit, curlew and stone plover; I have seen avocet, and in the north-east monsoon golden plover and all sorts of duck and geese, though these were difficult to approach on the mud.

I recall one shooting expedition in which the towboat *wallahs* played a part, though not a very successful one. I was taking a sailing vessel down in tow. We anchored about one or two in the afternoon at Kulpee, and would not be getting under way again until the following morning. When I told the captain that I was going ashore to see if I could pick up a curlew, or possibly a duck, he said that he had a gun and would come along, too. But he also had a wife who said that she would come as well. I pointed out to the lady that there would be about a quarter of a mile of deep mud to walk through before we reached *terra firma*, but she was determined to be of the party. I rather gathered from the husband that she would not let him out of her sight. Possibly—though this is only conjecture—he may have returned from a voyage to Buenos Ayres or Valparaiso with a long black hair on his coat collar (the wife

being a blonde), or some other indication of possible marital infidelity, which had determined the lady to accompany him afloat in future, and to keep a watchful eye on him.

However that may have been, and whatever the cause, she would not let him go ashore alone, and as he was resolved to go and shoot something, it was arranged that the towboat *wallahs* should use a plank as a sedan chair and carry the lady in state through the mud. It was no easy



THE UNFORTUNATE SLIP

task transferring her to the plank from the towboat, which is built V-shaped without any bilges so that it careens to a very awkward angle when its nose is resting on the bank. But we managed at length to get her on to the plank without mishap, and the procession started to stagger through the mud, the four heftiest men acting as bearers.

Now the mud was a foot or eighteen inches deep in places, and very slippery. The men did not look too happy about it, but we got along for a hundred yards or so before one of them slipped and came down, bringing his end of the plank with him, and precipitating the unfortunate lady backwards into the mud.

It took some little time to get the cavalcade going again.

The wife was very excited and reluctant to trust herself again to the plank, and the towboat *wallah*, who had fallen face downward under the plank, had to have the mud cleaned out of his eyes and nose before he could do anything. But after considerable discussion it was decided to try again, and this time they managed to reach the *bund*, although the men were very nervous, and every time they staggered or made a false step their passenger gave a shrill



THE REJECTED OFFERING

scream which startled them and made matters worse. Having reached the *bund* the lady sat down and rested, while the captain and I wandered along to where some curlew were walking about on the mud flat, but we could not get close enough to have a pot at them.

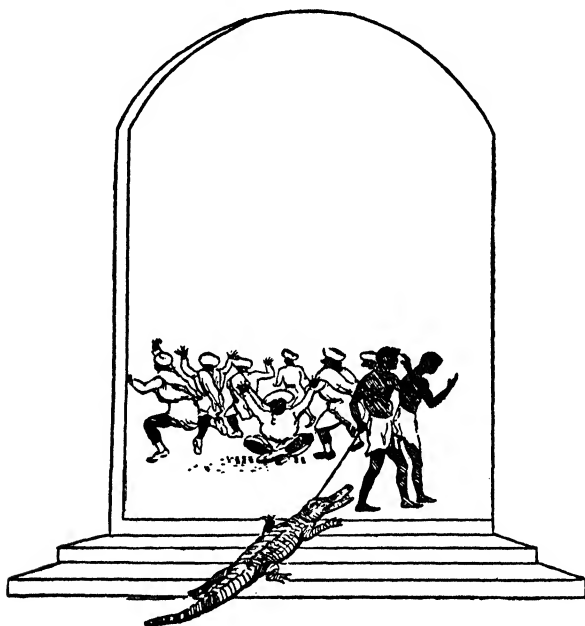
Walking back again the captain spotted a green parrot on a bush which he successfully stalked until within a few yards of it, when he dropped on one knee, took careful aim, and blew the unsuspecting bird out of the bush. It was badly knocked about but he was very pleased, and bore it triumphantly to where his wife was sitting gloomily nursing her wrath. He told her that the parrot would look well in a hat, but she rejected the idea with loathing and contempt,

and expressed her opinion of him and the towboat *wallahs*, and the river, and Calcutta, and the ship, and everything else, in no measured terms. It was a dismal little party which staggered back to the towboat, fortunately without further mishap. Probably the captain heard more about that outing every now and then during the passage home.

Many years afterwards, shortly before my retirement, when taking down the B.I.S.S. *Queda*, I had reason to be grateful to the towboat *wallahs*. The *Queda*, a large turret steamer, was loaded with coal and drawing about twenty-seven feet, and we had to ride out a cyclone at Sister Trees, a small anchorage above Royapur Bar. I told the towboat *wallahs* to show a light after dark on the bank, and they did so. Sometimes it was blown out, but they lit it again, and I found it most useful during the night. When the wind came out from the westward with a succession of violent squalls the little glimmering light enabled me to keep the vessel's stern off the bank. We had two anchors down and I spent the night on the bridge, moving the engines when necessary and slipping into the chartroom occasionally to change into dry things. The next day there was an abnormally high tide, and in spite of our heavy draught we got down to Saugor, where we anchored for the night. It was well we did so, for on proceeding in the morning we found the Lower Gasper and Intermediate Lights very much out of position ; but in daylight were able to pick up the buoys.

One morning, when on my way to join a steamer in the Reach, I met a towboat which had captured a crocodile about five feet long, which they asked me to purchase. I offered them three rupees for it, on condition that they took it to the Agra Bank and presented it to the Assistant Manager who had his desk to the right of the entrance ; but they were to lead it up the steps with a rope round its neck, and not carry it. On the previous day when in the bank I had mentioned to the Assistant Manager that I was going down the river the next day, and asked him jokingly

if he would like me to bring him anything back. He said, "Yes, bring me back a shark." I wrote a short note for the men to hand to him. Afterwards I learnt that the entry of the reptile had caused quite a commotion amongst the money-changers who sat just inside the door with piles of rupees stacked up on the floor. The towboat *wallahs*



A PRESENT FOR THE BANK MANAGER

were allowed to retain the crocodile ; in fact, they were paid to take it away.

The only other occasion on which I had anything to do with a deal in crocodile was when I assisted the captain of a German steamer to buy one from a fisherman who had caught it in his net. After some haggling we secured it for a small sum. The captain's idea was to take it to Hamburg where he would be able to dispose of it at a profit, either for

show purposes or as an article of diet. He had an interesting tale of an elephant which for some reason had had to be destroyed at Hamburg, and was purchased by one of the sausage manufacturers, who put on the market an *Elefant Würst*, which had a tremendous vogue and was considered the correct thing to buy. According to the captain all the best people ate the delicacy. Thus a demand had been created which was rather difficult to satisfy, as elephants do not often end their days in Hamburg. But the sausage merchants found some way out of their difficulty, for on returning to Hamburg six months later he found that *Elefant Würst* was still to be obtained, but at a greatly enhanced price. It might well be that a fortune was awaiting the man who could introduce *Crocodile Würst* to the gastronomists of the Fatherland.

Having hauled his purchase on deck, he and the carpenter carefully measured the animal, and proceeded to make an oblong box just big enough to hold him, which they caulked and made watertight. Then, having placed the prisoner in it, they nailed battens across so that he could not possibly get out. I shot several kites which thoughtlessly perched upon the jumper stay, and thus provided him with fresh meat for a day or two. But whether he survived to gladden the epicures of Hamburg I never learnt.

German steamers frequently carried consignments of birds and animals as deck passengers, and on one steamer I was amused by the behaviour of a young elephant, who was walking about loose on the after-deck, where the carpenter, a fat old fellow, was busily engaged sawing up wood and making boxes. The baby elephant kept picking up the tools when the man's back was turned and putting them down again in a different place, to the annoyance of the carpenter who had a good deal to say about it and seemed to be on the verge of apoplexy.

While on the subject of animals I should mention that the steamers which brought horses from Australia for the Indian market would sometimes take back other animals.

I took one vessel down, I think it was the *Bucephalus*, full of camels with which to open up a caravan route across the centre of Australia, and on another occasion a steamer with a consignment of mongooses to deal with a plague of rats in one of the Australian ports. I was told years after that instead of destroying the rats the mongooses had formed *mésalliances* with them, the result being a much bigger and fiercer rat. This may have been a yarn, like the story of the tree-climbing rabbits of which I was told by a wild-eyed old salt, who assured me that owing to the repeated droughts in one district of Australia the rabbits had developed claws like cats, which had enabled them to scale the tallest trees and feed on the foliage.

One of the passenger steamers coming to Calcutta was taking home as deck passengers some leopards and a tiger. The skipper was a red-haired Scot, a strict disciplinarian, who would stand no nonsense from anyone, and was very much respected. He was also a man of regular habits, one of which was to retire to his cabin on the bridge deck after lunch and turn in for an hour, both officers and crew having strict orders that during that hour he was not to be disturbed. On this particular voyage one of the deck passengers, namely the tiger, in some unaccountable manner got out of its cage.

The first man who sighted the beast standing loose on deck gave a yell of warning and took to the rigging, where he was followed by several others. Those who did not go aloft bolted down below and barricaded themselves in the cabins. Unfortunately it was the hour of the captain's *siesta*, which no man had ever dared to interrupt. But the situation was serious, and one of the quartermasters, taking his courage in both hands, ventured to knock timidly at the cabin door. There was no response. He knocked more loudly, and with a roar of rage, bristling with indignation, the potentate emerged and demanded the reason of the outrage.

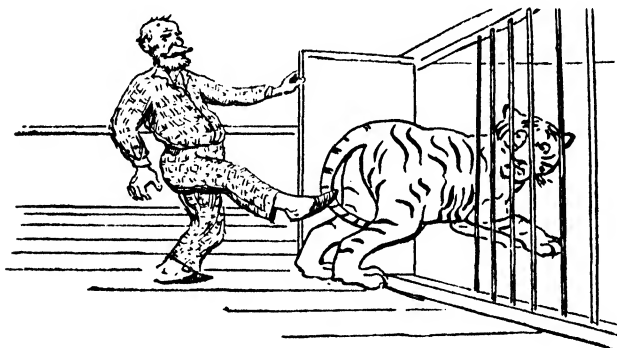
In frightened tones the quartermaster said :

"The tiger's out, sir."

"Then put him back again," shouted the captain, preparing to return to his bunk.

"He won't go back, sir."

"What!" roared the infuriated skipper. "Won't go back! I'll see about that," and boiling over with indignation marched aft in his pyjamas and slippers to where the tiger was standing, blinking at the sunlight. Seizing the astonished beast by the scruff of its neck the skipper kicked it into the cage, slammed the door to, bolted it, and returned to his cabin, declaring loudly what he would do



THE CAPTAIN AND THE TIGER

to anyone who let it out again or dared to disturb his afternoon rest.

To get back to the boats on the Hooghly, which are really the subject of this chapter and not tigers. The most distinctive boat on the river is undoubtedly the dinghy, the gondola of Calcutta. Every sailing vessel engaged a dinghy which was always in attendance during the ship's stay in port. Dinghys on the look-out for a job would go down to Diamond Harbour, and in the north-east monsoon even as far as Saugor, where they would lie in wait for an inward-

The lady came on deck. It was her first voyage to India, and she was ignorant of the ways and customs of the East.

"Why have they burnt him?" she demanded. "What had he done?"

It was explained to her that, being Hindus, Juggernauts were born to be burnt, whereas Boxos, being followers of the Prophet, were interred like the rest of us.

Juggernaut having been burnt, the captain told Boxo that as he was the first-comer he might have the appointment as dinghy *wallah* to the ship on a monthly salary. But a few miles farther on we sighted another dinghy lying in wait in mid-channel, which also managed to catch hold of the bumkin, and in the *manji* the captain recognised Juggernaut whose death they had been lamenting.

"Why, Juggernaut!" he cried; "Boxo said you were dead."

"No, Sahib, I not dead," said the indignant Juggernaut.

The captain turned to reproach the perfidious Boxo with his untruthfulness, and caught a glance of that worthy's head as he slid down the rope into his dinghy and cast off.

Unless we had engaged a towboat we always had to employ a dinghy to put us on board any vessel which we wanted to join. They were not built for speed, but were very well handled by the dinghy *wallahs* and were quite safe in the strongest tideway, and amongst the buoys. I must have used them many hundreds of times by night and day, and cannot recall any accident. But on one occasion, on arriving at the *ghât* on my way to join a steamer, I found that all the dinghy *wallahs* were on strike. There was an outbreak of bubonic plague at the time, and it was rumoured that the Government were introducing inoculation or vaccination as a preventative. The dinghy *wallahs*, like all Bengalis, are at the same time both suspicious and credulous. Some mischief-monger had persuaded them that the Government intended them no good by this *tikka*,

as they called inoculation, but was merely out to slay them ; so they all went on strike by way of protest.

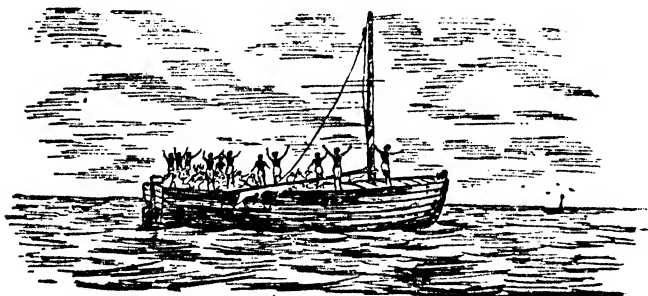
The same sort of thing happened at the time of the building of the Hooghly Bridge, when there was a *galla cutta* or throat-cutting scare, and for a week or so the lower-class Indians were chary of venturing out after dark ; for they firmly believed that the authorities had given orders to their myrmidons to furnish ten thousand heads, which were to be placed beneath the foundations of the bridge ; and the native population were not taking any risks.

On this occasion all the dinghies refused to take me, and as I had to get off to my steamer somehow, I told them that I would take one of the dinghies and scull myself down to the vessel. But a venerable white-bearded Mussulman *manji* came to the rescue. I had frequently employed him, and in answer to my appeal he said, "*Atcha, Sahib ; I'll go,*" or words to that effect. None of the others would join him, so the old fellow sculled me down alone.

As we went I argued the matter with him and pointed out the folly of supposing that the Government would wish to destroy people who were useful, especially as at that time there was a shortage of labour at the docks. He was not to be convinced. Finally I said, "Look here, I shall be back again in a few days, and will come with a vaccinator to the *ghât*, be vaccinated by him before you all, and then you can all be vaccinated." The Bengali rarely laughs—they have not much to laugh about—but the old boy laughed quite heartily at my simplicity. For could I not see that they would put harmless stuff into me and poison into the others ? I gave it up and having reached the steamer rewarded the venerable sceptic for helping me in my hour of need.

The boats used by the fishermen on the river are small, light, open boats, sharp at each end, and very handy. These men had a tiresome habit of placing their nets in mid-channel, or in the centre of the best track across a bar. It

was sometimes difficult to avoid passing over their boats, but during my time on the Hooghly I never to my knowledge hit a boat. A year or two before I retired, however, I was mixed up in a disaster which befell a boat. I was proceeding up from Saugor in a tramp steamer in ballast one morning. We were going up over the last of the ebb through the Eden Channel when we came across a large decked boat full of people who shouted to us for help. We



AN APPEAL FOR HELP

slowed down and went alongside of her. They told us that their sail had been blown away in a squall on the previous evening, that they had no anchor, and were drifting out to sea where they would be lost. The captain of the steamer consented to our towing them to some part of the river where they could reach the bank and tie up.

Accordingly we threw them a rope, and with the engines at 'slow' continued on our way. As the boat steered very badly, sheering about first on one quarter and then on the other, I stopped the engines, went aft and told them that unless they steered properly and kept right astern of the steamer we would cast them off. The engineer was told to keep the engines 'dead slow' and we crawled along over the ebb until we were about half-way through the

Jellingham Channel. They seemed to be following well enough, so I sat down to breakfast on the bridge.

Suddenly I heard shouts from the boat and jumped up just in time to see her take a wide sheer on the starboard quarter and capsize. She appeared to fall to pieces as she went over, the mast to which the tow-rope was attached coming clean through the bows, and there they all were in the water. The engines were stopped, and a boat manned by four men and the second officer sent away as soon as possible to pick up the people. There were about thirty of them, men and women ; they all seemed able to swim and were hanging on to the wreckage. I believe we got them all, including one man who was dead when picked up, possibly from shock.

When our boat got back, the poor things all climbed up the ladder and came on board without a stitch of clothing amongst them, having shed their garments while in the water. The first thing to do, therefore, was to clothe them. I had a couple of sheets and some towels, and the captain, who seemed a very good sort, gave them several sheets and a tablecloth, which were torn into strips. The dead man was quite dead and did not appear to have been drowned, so we covered him up and decided to land them all by the *dák* boat at Diamond Harbour. I wrote a letter to the Magistrate, enclosed what money I had, and three sovereigns from the captain, and asked that the money should be used in sending them to their village. One of them said that he had had two hundred rupees which were lost, and what were we going to do about it ? I told him that I was sorry but that he should have seen to it that the boat was properly steered, and that in any case he was better off than he would have been had the boat drifted out to sea.

At Diamond Harbour, after we had transferred them to the *dák* boat and were about to lower the dead man as well, there was a chorus of protest : they did not want the corpse in the boat at any price. We told them that he belonged to them and would have to go in the boat, and that they could

give him a proper funeral as soon as they landed. They didn't seem to care very much whether he had a funeral or not, and all huddled together as far from the body as possible. I heard nothing more of the matter : at the time I was being kept very busy and as soon as I arrived in town was appointed to take away some other vessel.

CHAPTER XVI

Calcutta as a health resort—Cholera—The case of the *Crofton Hall*—How to test eggs—The Bengal coal steamers—A grisly tale—The captain's false teeth—A tale of a kite.

I DON'T think Calcutta could have been described as an unhealthy port at that time. The climate was trying for the crews in the hot season, and there would be cases of sunstroke and fever. The men did not take much care of themselves, or realise that the sun was dangerous. But compared with other ports frequented by sailors, where yellow fever and malaria were prevalent, Calcutta might have been described as salubrious. By 1878, when I joined, all vessels were supplied with good water, and no longer had to pump the river water into their tanks. The practice of throwing the dead into the sacred stream had also ceased, probably to the chagrin of the crocodiles. Any person throwing a dead body into the river was liable to quite a heavy fine, and it was unusual to see anything of the sort floating about. But not many years before, it had been customary for ships to get their drinking water from the river and when it was being pumped into the tanks a man was stationed with a boathook to keep the end of the suction hose free from floating bodies.

At that time, too, there was no proper drainage system in the town, and much of the scavenging was effected by jackals, vultures, adjutants, crows and pariah dogs. The drains were open and inhabited by bandicoots, enormous rats of whose ferocity old residents gave blood-curdling accounts. But by the time of which I write things had altered very much for the better and the port might be described as fairly healthy.

Yet although fairly healthy, Calcutta was never entirely free from certain diseases. Cholera, smallpox and plague were endemic, though they very seldom assumed epidemic proportions. Amongst the shipping the bumboats which plied their trade in the port were responsible for a certain amount of sickness, and one year all vessels were circularised with an account of a cholera outbreak which had occurred on a ship lying in the port, the cause of which had been traced to its source. A number of men had suddenly been taken ill on the ship in question and several of them had died. It was found that they had purchased milk from a bumboat; the milk was traced, and it was proved that it had been diluted with water taken from a tank or pond in which had been washed the clothing of a person who had died of cholera.

A case which aroused a great deal of interest at the time was that of the four-masted barque *Crofton Hall*, which towed to sea and discharged her pilot on June 10th, 1892.

When she left there was a fresh breeze from the westward, which increased to a gale, and the brig stood down south under lower topsails, making the station again on the morning of the 12th, when the weather had moderated and the wind come round to south-west. A four-masted barque was sighted to the northward of the Light. She was hove to, and showing signals of distress. The Survey steamer *Resolute*, which had been communicating with the Light, came to the brig with letters and was asked to put a pilot on board the barque. Mr. A. J. Gilman was sent off to her. This officer, who retired in 1899, is living at Deal, and has sent me the following account from notes taken at the time.

" *June 12th.* Sent on board Survey vessel to be transferred to ship flying signals of distress three or four miles north-north-west off the Eastern Channel Light Vessel.

" *9.0 a.m.* Boarded the *Crofton Hall* and found things very bad. Ten men very ill lying in the iron house on deck.

Six men had died before I took charge. One had gone mad and disappeared. The steward, a Chinaman, died about an hour after I boarded the vessel. I had had a look at him and asked him how he was. He replied that he was feeling better. He died a few minutes later. There was a very bad smell all over the vessel.

"About 4.0 p.m. the tug *Retriever* came alongside. With the help of the donkey engine we managed to get the hawsers on board and to take in the canvas. I put my servant Ameer at the wheel and went aloft with the officers to make the sails fast. Towed into Saugor and anchored for the night.

"June 18th. Towed up, arriving at Garden Reach in the afternoon. The men were all sent to the General Hospital. Put two anchors down and the Health Officer allowed me to go home."

Mr. Gillman took the *Crofton Hall* down when she left again on June 28rd, but in the interval an enquiry was held to discover the cause of the outbreak. Sailing vessels usually carried on the break of the poop one or more casks of polished oak with brass hoops which were known as harness casks and were used to contain salt beef or pork preserved in brine. It was decided that in the case of the *Crofton Hall* the brine had evaporated, leaving exposed some of the salt beef which had gone rotten, and this being served out to the crew had caused the trouble.

The first case of sickness had occurred shortly after the pilot had left the vessel at the Sandheads. First one helmsman and then another complained of feeling unwell and had to be relieved. At the same time the weather became bad, and sail had to be shortened. When this had been done and the captain was able to visit the men in the deckhouse he found them dying. It must have been a terrible night, blowing hard and all hands except the captain and his officers, who fortunately had not eaten any of the poisonous beef, down with cholera.

Quoting again from his notebook Mr. Gillman says :

“*June 23rd.* Garden Reach, *Crofton Hall*. New crew on board. Started to unmoor, and hove up one anchor. The crew came aft to the captain and said that they were not going to sea in the cholera ship. Dropped the second anchor again. The men left the ship and returned to Calcutta.

“*June 24th.* New crew came on board with a new second mate, who was drunk, so put him in his berth. At 8.0 p.m. found him dead in his cabin. Had to send for the doctor.

“*June 25th.* Proceeded down in tow.

“*June 26th.* Arrived at Sandheads and taken out by brig.” He adds : “Not sorry, enough of one ship.”

A year or two afterwards I myself was put on board the *Crofton Hall*, inward-bound, deep-laden ; fine weather, wind south-westerly hauling to the westward. When we were about level with the Intermediate Light the wind came west by south, which made it impossible to lay through the Gasper. I was considering going round and standing down south again, when a smoke appeared to the northward, which proved to be the tug *Warren Hastings*, Captain Heath, so we hung on, struck a bargain with him, and got his hawsers on board. I recall how nicely he handled his tug, coming under our jibboom end, and catching hold of the hauling lines with a long bamboo boathook. I felt grateful to him for turning up just when he was wanted, for the westerly weather continued for two or three days, and had he not appeared in the nick of time we should have been beating about outside waiting for a slant to get in, always a tedious business. And I remember that he was wearing an enormous straw hat with a high crown, which must have been specially made for him at Kulpee, where the bumboat *wallahs* used to bring off hats made of paddy straw amongst other things, such as eggs, chickens, bananas, coconuts, etc., which they sold to the crews of the sailing vessels which anchored there on the way down.

Outward-bound ships would occasionally take the

opportunity of laying in from the bumboats at Kulpee a store of eggs which would keep for a while if packed in salt. In connection with this there was an amusing story of a captain who told his steward to buy eggs from the bumboat, and enjoined him to test them all in a bucket of water, and make sure of their freshness. The pilot who was taking the ship down, and who was breakfasting on the poop while watching the steering, was given a couple of boiled eggs. The first one he tackled was distinctly doubtful, and there was no question at all about the second one. As he told his boy to throw it overboard quickly, he heard the skipper's voice raised in anger, and on looking down the skylight saw that eggs were the cause of the trouble.

"I thought I told you to test them all with water," roared the infuriated commander.

"So I did, sir," replied a very frightened-looking steward. "I tried over a hundred of them and only kept those which floated."

It was a disappointing business, the only person who had scored being the bumboat *wallah*.

It was some years after I became a pilot that Bengal coal began to play an important part in the trade of the port. Several tramp steamers came out on time-charter to run on the coast with coal, which they carried from Calcutta to Madras, Colombo or Bombay, and the British India Company commenced to build steamers for the coal trade. These latter were broad-beamed, flat-bottomed vessels, and we did not like them because they were slow and did not steer too well. They were deep-draughted as vessels went in those days, and after crossing Moyapur Bar on the way down it became a matter of anxious speculation whether, owing to their slow speed and deep draught, they would be able to "save the Gut," *i.e.*, get down to the James and Mary with sufficient water still showing at the semaphore to float them over the Bar. I fancy this little problem was responsible for a good many extra grey hairs on the heads of some of the older members who had been accustomed to

smaller, handier and speedier vessels of quite a different class.

The names of these first steamers built by the B.I.S.N. Company to carry coal all began with O. They were the *Okhla*, *Okhara*, *Onda*, *Ooloobaria*, *Onipenta*. Their steering gear was so constructed that to get the helm over required a great many turns of the wheel. This was quite all right at sea, of course, where the helmsman could not give her too much helm ; but it was awkward in the river if the helm was required quickly to cope with a sudden sheer in an eddy. I only recollect having trouble with one of them, the *Ooloobaria*, and that was not on account of her steering, but because the Upper Bellary Bar had shoaled up a foot without any warning.

When leaving Kulpee we had to cross the Upper Bellary Bar as soon as possible on the rising tide, in order to save the Gasper Bar on the ebb ; for with a deep-laden, slow-steaming vessel that was always the problem of the second day. So when the tidal semaphore showed a rise of tide, which when added to the last report of the Bar gave the *Ooloobaria's* draught, we went full speed ahead and word was passed down to the engine-room to give her all they could. As we came on to the Bar she sheered over to the westward and stuck. When the rising tide lifted her, she would merely have drifted still more on to the sand to the westward, unless held in position. So we dropped the port anchor under foot and let her take the chain as she drifted until she had got fifteen fathoms, when we held on and, as the chain tautened, gave her a little more slowly, link by link, until she had got about thirty fathoms. We then held on all we could. There was a big strain on the cable and windlass, but nothing parted, and she came head to tide and all afloat once more. We hove up and proceeded, but failed to save the Gasper and came to at Saugor. I reported the matter, of course, but heard no more about it. The Bar had shoaled up eighteen inches.

Amongst the first steamers which came on time-charter

to carry coal on the coast I recollect the *Jupiter* and *Vortigern*, which fell to my lot on several occasions to take up and down the river. The *Vortigern* was commanded by Captain James Fairweather, who had been for many years in the whaling trade, sailing out of Dundee, and I found his stories of life in the Arctic most interesting. He had been close to the spot where the members of the ill-fated Greely expedition had wintered, and from his description one was able to form some slight idea of what winter in the Arctic really meant.

He had one rather grisly anecdote about a man of his crew who in heavy weather had been washed off the fore-castle head, swept along the foredeck, and jammed under a winch. When extricated, the man's head appeared as a red ball with no trace of any features, but Captain Fairweather discovered a tuft of hair in the place where the chin ought to be, and by careful manipulation gradually uncovered the features. The scalp had been severed at the back of the neck and turned inside out over the man's face. It was satisfactory to know that he made a good recovery, and was none the worse for his misadventure.

It was with tales such as this that Captain Fairweather beguiled the time and relieved the monotony of a long day on the bridge. He was a great many years on the coast, and naturally acquired some knowledge of the river. This tempted him on one occasion, when there was a shortage of pilots at the Sandheads, to attempt the journey up by himself. He got as far as Diamond Harbour, but then thought better of it, and remained at anchor there until a pilot was sent down to bring the vessel up.

Captain Vasey, who commanded the *Jupiter*, hailed from Whitby where the jet comes from, and on one occasion presented me with a jet scarfpin, which he said would come in useful if at any time I went into mourning.

Other steamers which came out to the coal trade were the *Putney Bridge* and the *Westminster Bridge*, commanded by two brothers. Eugene Chivers had the *Putney Bridge*. He

was quite an interesting person with a good collection of stories to enliven the time passed on the bridge and make the pilot forget the slow rate of progress of his vessel. I doubt whether I ever knew the Christian name of the brother who commanded the *Westminster*, but he was known to the seafaring fraternity as "Bald-headed Chivers," and when I saw him without his hat the justice of the sobriquet was apparent.

We rather liked the coal steamers, for although they arrived at the Sandheads in ballast, and consequently were unprofitable from a pilot's point of view, they were always nice and deep when they left port. One or two of the old-fashioned vessels which came into the trade had a draught out of all proportion to their carrying capacity and were highly esteemed in consequence.

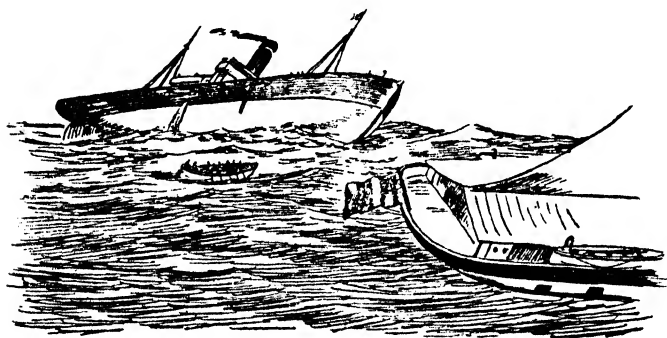
I was always glad to get the British India steamer *Roma*, which drew 25 feet 6 inches although she did not carry much coal, and there was a nice little steamer named the *Deepdale* which drew the same amount of water and was very popular. When she unfortunately grounded and capsized at Pir Serang crossing her loss was lamented by all.

This question of draught and carrying capacity was one which shipowners and pilots viewed from totally different angles, and we regretted the tendency to build large, flat-bottomed, broad-beamed, shallow-draughted vessels which easily carried in one hull the cargoes which would have loaded three or four of the good old-fashioned, narrow-beamed, deep-keeled steamers. Progress is usually a matter of dissatisfaction to those who are adversely affected and we christened the big shallow-draughted steamers "pilot-robbers."

One afternoon at the Sandheads I boarded a ballast steamer which I had brought down the river a fortnight or so before, when she had departed with a cargo of coal for Colombo. I was not feeling particularly overjoyed, for there was another deeper vessel in sight, which I naturally would rather have had, and the ill-concealed satisfaction of

the man who had the turn after me, as he commiserated with me on my bad luck, was hard to bear. However, I followed my traps and my boy into the boat, and as we pulled towards the empty hull, which was floating like a balloon on the water, consoled myself with the reflection that at all events the skipper was a cheery soul who kept a good table and would make me welcome.

We went alongside rather gingerly, for there was a bit of a sea on and she was rolling badly, giving us a glimpse of her bottom as she lifted her bilge when swinging to wind-



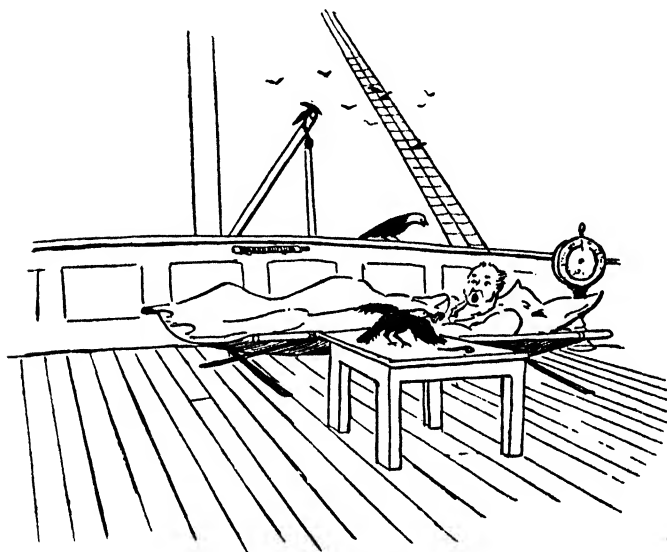
BOARDING A STEAMER IN BALLAST

ward, and the next moment a view of her deck as she swung down towards us. However, we were used to the game, the boat's crew kept the boat clear with the loom of an oar, and I got on to the ladder as the boat rose towards the lee rail, and found my way to the bridge where the captain, with legs wide apart, was grasping the engine-room telegraph for support.

I hardly recognised the man, so greatly had he altered in appearance since I bade him farewell a fortnight or so ago. He was then a chubby, cheery, ruddy-faced man, with a merry eye and hearty laugh; but the person who now greeted me had hollow cheeks, dull eyes, and seemed

to have a difficulty in articulating distinctly. What could have happened to him? In response to my sympathetic enquiry he told me in lisping accents the whole sad story.

They had had a good run down to Colombo and were lying in the harbour discharging their coal. At night he had had his bed made up on the upper bridge where it was



THE ROBBERY

nice and cool, had smoked his last pipe, knocked out the ashes carefully, placed the pipe on the little table by the side of his camp bed, and by the side of the pipe had carefully placed his false teeth. He had had rather a tiring day and was soon sleeping soundly.

As morning dawned he was lying in the pleasant state of half-awake and half-asleep, when he heard the flutter of wings, and on turning his head saw a crow carrying off his teeth. He sprang out of bed, but there was nothing to be done; the wretched bird was already a cable's length away

and the teeth were gone for ever. His voice shook with emotion as he told me, as distinctly as he could, the miserable tale of how he had been reduced to living on slops all the way up the Bay. I condoled with him and discussed the merits of the various Calcutta dentists, to one of whom he would have to go on arrival, in order to repair his loss and be put in position to enjoy once more the pleasures of the table.

On the following day, as we passed Budge Budge, a



THE SAILOR AND THE KITE

number of crows came off, perched on the jumper stay, and filled the air with their discordant cries. The captain told them what he thought of them, with a wealth of expletive which it did one good to hear, and it was evident that the bird of Colombo had quite killed in the captain's breast any kindly feeling which he may have previously entertained towards the crow family.

His violent abuse of the crows recalled a story told by a member of my Service concerning a kite which drew upon itself a torrent of abuse from an old shellback. My friend wished to visit a sailing vessel which was lying off Prinsep's

Ghât and which he had brought into the port some weeks previously loaded with salt. The salt had been discharged, and she had nearly finished loading with jute. He wanted to know when she would be ready to take down. As he was about to step into the dinghy belonging to the ship he was joined by the parson of the Seamen's Mission, a short, stout man clad in a black frockcoat in spite of the heat, for it was the "Merry Month of May" and hot at that. The reverend gentleman also wished to call on the vessel.

They were pushing off when two of the crew who had been on shore leave appeared on the *ghât* and were also embarked. One of them, a hard-bitten old fellow who looked as though he had rounded the Horn many a time, had just purchased a very fine solar topee, cream coloured and embellished with an elaborate silken *pugaree*. Both he and his companion had evidently been slaking their thirst. One can get very thirsty in Calcutta in the month of May, And they had been slaking it well. They greeted the parson as an old acquaintance and the dinghy proceeded towards the ship.

As usual there were a lot of crows and kites flying about overhead and behaving in their customary untidy manner, and one of the latter in passing soiled the old shellback's new topee, entirely spoiling its appearance. The ancient mariner took it off, looked at the damage, shook his fist at the bird, and proceeded to express his feelings in the most dreadful language.

The parson raised his hand in protest. "Nay, nay, my Brother," said he gently. "Let us not exclaim, but rather render thanks to Providence that cows have no wings."

This reflection did not seem to give the man much comfort and he was still talking about the bird as they boarded the vessel.

CHAPTER XVII

Coolie ships—The *Albyn* and her skipper—A quick run—"None so deaf . . ."—The B.I. steamers—An unusual head-dress—captains and their ways—"Nosey" and his mates—Beer and souvenirs—The China mail-steamers—A very superior boy—The sinking of the *Kowshing*—German liners—A fat skipper.

A PILOT identifies himself with the vessel of which for the time being he has become the directing intelligence, becoming absorbed in its movements and behaviour to the exclusion of all other interests. He will, it is true, be mindful of the interests of other vessels to the extent of giving them sufficient space in which to pass him, if they are overtaking or meeting him, and in the case of a vessel meeting him would give her pilot any important information which it would be essential for him to know. But beyond that he will not, as a rule, concern himself with the doings of vessels other than the one which he is himself conducting.

There are, however, exceptions to every rule, and on being told by J. Page that he had been appointed to take away a French barque without steam, it occurred to me that I might be able to help him. He was going to leave the next day with the barque, and I was going to leave Budge Budge (about eight miles below Calcutta) on the morning following. It was the month of March, the end of the north-east monsoon, and the wind was southerly. Sailing down through the upper reaches against a southerly wind was likely to prove a tedious business. I told Page that if he could manage to be dropping past Budge Budge, as my steamer hauled out of moorings, I would take him in tow and tow him as far as he liked.

It all worked according to plan. The captain of the

steamer, who was a very nice man, raised no objection, and as we hauled out of moorings on the first of the ebb the French barque went drifting slowly past.

I steamed up above the moorings, turned round, went close to the barque, which was lying across the tide with her head to the eastward, stopped under her bows while Page's towboat *wallahs* took from us a line with which we hove the end of the barque's hawser on board, and when that was secured to our after-bollard we proceeded on our way followed by the French vessel, whose captain I learnt



J. J. PAGE

afterwards was greatly impressed by the kindly act of a strange steamer.

We went along nicely together, but not very quickly, for the steamer was a slow tramp whose best speed would not be more than nine knots an hour, and with the barque in tow we did about seven through the water. At Fisherman's Point we opened up the Hooghly Point semaphore, and I saw that by the time we got to the Eastern Gut there would not be too much water for the barque, which was drawing about seventeen feet. We should be all right with our draught of fourteen.

As we rounded Fultah Point and opened up the semaphore again I saw that it was going to be a close thing.

Page went on to the forecastle of his vessel and asked me by means of a blackboard what I thought about it. I replied through the megaphone, "I leave it to you."

He then said, "Cast off," and we let go his hawser. He let the barque lose her way, then dropped his anchor under

foot, let her turn to it and brought up just above the anchoring creek. He was quite right, for by the time we got on to the bar there was only about six inches more than his draught, and that only in one track. The tow we gave him certainly saved him a day or two of troublesome work in the upper reaches.

He got across the Gut and to Diamond Harbour on the next tide, and eventually to sea.

In the 'nineties the traffic on the river was becoming mostly 'steam,' but there was still a sprinkling of sailing vessels of large size, such as the *Cairnie Hill*, *Milton Stewart* or *Muncaster Castle* to mention one or two of them, and the carrying of coolies to the West Indies was still done by Nourse's ships, and very well done, too.

There were some three or four doctors whose lives were spent in travelling with the coolies, who were placed entirely in their charge. The masters of the ships were, of course, responsible for the navigation of the vessels, but the organisation and care of the six or seven hundred coolies who composed the cargo, were the business of the doctor. I do not know who was responsible for selecting these latter, but, whoever he was, he was certainly master of his job.

I took several of these 'coolie ships' down the river and was always greatly impressed with the efficient arrangements of the doctor. The coolies would have been recruited from Northern Bengal, Bihar, or Assam, and collected in barracks at the Dépôt in Garden Reach, where they were well fed and cared for, and every precaution taken to keep them healthy and free from disease. They were divided into small gangs or squads which were placed under the control of men who were very carefully selected from among the crowd, so that when embarked on the vessel which was to be their home for three months or so, they were already under some sort of discipline, and easy to handle. On boarding one of these ships to take her down, I was always impressed by the absence of disorder or confusion. The coolies might have been living there for weeks, instead of

having just come on board. They did not hamper the movements of the crew at all as these latter went about the business of passing hawsers with the tug and getting under way. The coolies were young and well-made people, and always looked as though they had been well fed at the Depôt. When the time arrived for the morning meal, the leaders of the gangs collected and shepherded their people in the spot allotted to them, the cooks brought along the *dekchis* of curry and rice, and everyone was quite at home and happy.

They were not quite so happy when towing out from Saugor, and for the matter of that neither was I, as I ate my lunch to an accompaniment of the noises made by several hundred people all being seasick together. The doctors received so much per head, I was told, for each coolie landed safe and sound at the destination, and in the event of the voyage being unduly prolonged through adverse winds, the tedium of the passage was likely to be compensated for by the birth of a few little coolies to increase the total.

It had become unusual for any vessel to sail up the river, but one afternoon I was put on board the four-masted barque *Albyn* in ballast, and H. D. Lindquist accompanied me as leadsman. We sailed into Saugor and anchored for the night. The captain said, "I suppose we wait here for a tug." But I had been feeling rather out of sorts, and it occurred to me that it would probably do me good to sail up, so the next morning as there was a nice southerly breeze we weighed and ran up to Diamond Harbour, where we came to for the night.

On the following day we weighed on the last of the ebb with the wind about south. As we approached Luff Point I told the captain that I should like to have his best helmsman at the wheel as we needed to keep as close to the wind as she would lie. He said that he would take the helm himself. We managed to get into Hooghly Bight, but were unpleasantly close to Hooghly Sand, and the leadsman

gave me uncomfortably small water. The captain presented an interesting appearance at the wheel. It had not occurred to me that he was bald, for he had done what so many baldheaded men do to cover their deficiency, that is to say had grown his hair very long on one side and drawn it across the bald place. As he stood there without a hat, the breeze suddenly lifted his locks until they stood bolt upright, exposing his shining cranium.

We got round Hooghly Bight and across the Eastern Gut, but I found her rather a tight fit in Nurpur Bight and thought we scraped the flat above Nurpur Point as we came round. Nobody else seemed to notice anything, so very likely I was mistaken. Jogging along under easy sail we arrived at Garden Reach without any incident, and, as the flood was still running, rounded her to, dropped the anchor, and handed her over to the Harbour Master. The *Albyn's* tonnage was 2,200 and I do not think that any other vessel of that tonnage has sailed up to Calcutta.

H. D. Lindquist, who hove the lead with me in the *Albyn*, had a very quick run up the river when in pilotage charge of the ship *Jura* in June, 1898. This vessel arrived at the Sandheads and was boarded by Lindquist at 6.30 a.m. It was blowing fresh from the south-south-west, and the *Jura*, a very smart ship employed in the coolie trade, got to Garden Reach at 6.30 p.m., having done the distance in twelve hours, a performance which I do not think has ever been beaten. She was fully laden, her draught being twenty-one feet.

Lindquist is a grandson of Commander William Lindquist who was in pilotage charge of the barque *Swallow* when she was lost on the James and Mary in 1822.

At about the same time that I sailed the *Albyn* up to Calcutta I had a rather amusing experience on an American soft-wood ship, the *City of Philadelphia*. The American sailing vessels were all built of wood; as a rule they were well found, well manned, and the crew well fed. The captain of the *City of Philadelphia* carried his wife with

him. I found them both very pleasant, as was also the mate, Mr. Thompson, who hailed from Virginia, had distinguished himself in the Civil War, and was a quiet-mannered, pleasant-spoken man at ordinary times. We were running up the Eastern Channel before a light southerly wind and when the bell rang for tea I told the second mate to keep her on her course and went below to join the captain, his wife and Mr. Thompson. The American ships had a great reputation for their cakes, and tea was always a meal worth attending.

Mr. Thompson was chatting with the lady, and I was talking to the captain, when the sound of altercation reached us from the forecastle. "Say, Mr. Thompson," said the captain, "the boys seem to be a bit fresh." Mr. Thompson rose from his seat, put his head outside the mess-room door which opened on to the quarterdeck, and roared out, "If you *** sons of *** don't stop that noise by *** I'll be amongst you." It was quite unprintable and I looked anxiously at the lady; but she appeared to have heard nothing and was quietly eating some cake.

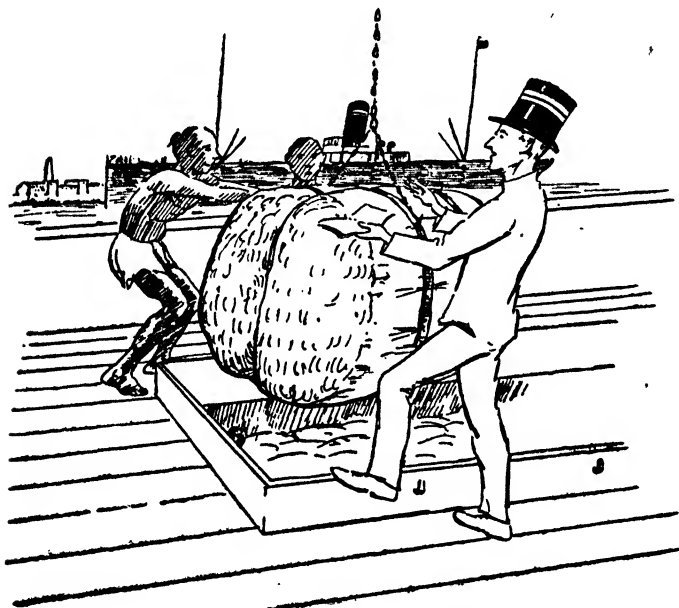
There was profound silence forward. Mr. Thompson resumed his seat and his conversation, and I understood that what Mr. Thompson said on deck was not heard in the cabin.

But by this time most of my work was on steamers, and sailing vessels were the exception. I preferred the B.I.S.N. Company's to all others. There were a number of small steamers of the B.I. running on the coast, such as the *Chupra*, *Chindwara*, *Byculla*, *Colaba*, which used to fall to my lot from time to time, and which I was always glad to board. The men in command were generally old friends; we understood one another and had mutual friends and common topics of interest to discuss.

The accommodation on the steamers was comfortable and the messing good. The extraordinary thing about the messing was that it seemed to be exactly the same on all the B.I. steamers. This was particularly noticeable with the

Irish stew, which always appeared on the menu, and was always just the same and very good. I used to wonder how they did it, and concluded that someone must drill all the cooks to do the thing in the same way.

There were many interesting characters among the commanders and officers of the Company. An amusing



HIS IDEA OF THE B.I. UNIFORM

tale was told of one of the latter. I think his name was Bland. He had been taken to task by the Marine Superintendent, Captain Atkinson, for not being properly dressed in the Company's uniform when tallying in cargo. He promised to mend his ways, but the next day, on boarding the steamer, the Superintendent was startled to see him working at his hatch, wearing a top hat with two white bands round it in imitation of the steamer's funnel.

I always enjoyed meeting Captain Sheldrake, whom I piloted in all sorts of steamers, big and small, belonging to the B.I. He had a dry humour which was very pleasant. Captain George Brown was also a notable person, a stout man with a big voice. On boarding his vessel on one occasion I found him in a state of great indignation over a mishap which had happened to him at Rangoon. It appeared that he was in the habit of going ashore there to gamble, and on the evening before sailing he had left the steamer for that purpose with a goodly wallet of notes in his trouser pocket, but had not proceeded far from the vessel when he was attacked by some thieves who were lying in wait for him, and in their eagerness to get at the spoil tore his trouser leg completely off, and with it the pocket containing all his money. "But," he said, "they won't get a haul like that another time. No, sir, for I will distribute the notes all over my body in different pockets." There was another story about a gamecock which he picked up at Singapore, a very fine bird. He took it to Rangoon and issued a challenge, which was taken up by the Chinamen, and a meeting arranged. When Brown turned up with his bird, expecting to win the stakes, the Chinaman produced a veritable giant of a cock which gave the bird from Singapore no chance whatever.

I recollect on one occasion, when taking him up the river, watching Captain Brown and the *topas* trying to wash a white Persian cat, which the captain hoped to sell at a handsome profit in Calcutta. There were several Browns in the B.I. service known by a variety of nicknames, such as Bangle Brown, Blinky Brown and Muckraputti Brown, from some peculiarity or incident connected with them. Another very interesting character amongst the commanders running on the coast, or travelling east, was a tall, spare-built man, who for obvious reasons was known as 'Nosey.'

Standing by the side of the pilot on the bridge as they left Saugor in the early morning, on their way to Calcutta,

the large-nosed captain looked thoughtfully at a youthful officer who had just emerged on deck and was standing by the rail. "That," said he, "is Mr. Wilkins the fourth officer. He comes on deck, blows his nose, lights a cigarette and his work's finished for the day. The tall handsome man with the blue eyes," he continued, "is Mr. Jones the third officer, a splendid fellow but unobservant. We were bound for Melbourne and were expecting to sight land. Mr. Jones was on watch and I told him to call me if he sighted anything. An hour or so had elapsed and nothing having been reported I went up on the bridge and asked Mr. Jones if anything was yet in sight. He replied, 'No, sir.' 'But what is that on the port bow?' I enquired. Mr. Jones gazed carefully through his telescope and exclaimed, 'It looks like an island, sir.' 'You're right,' I said; 'it's the bally island of Australia. That's where we're bound for, Mr. Jones.'"

Once, when taking him down, I went into his cabin and found him gazing at a cat and five kittens which were lying comfortably in his bunk. On seeing me he started to curse the cat and said he had a good mind to throw it and its kittens overboard; but the cat merely continued to purr, and it was obvious that he and the cat were really on very good terms.

After the Chinese war he brought a British regiment from Shanghai to Calcutta, and while going up the river showed the pilot a fine collection of silken things and ivory curios which he had got from the troops. "And I had a job to get them, too," he said. "After we left Shanghai I asked the men to show me any little treasures they might have acquired in the way of loot. But they would not hear of it. 'We've got some things,' they said, 'but we mean to keep them till we get to England and sell them there.'"

"I thought it over, and a happy thought struck me. I asked the butler how much beer he had got on board. It was some hundred dozen bottles. 'All right,' I said; 'it's all wanted in the cabin and you don't sell any to the

soldiers without first consulting me.' The next day a deputation of the men came to see me about beer. I explained to them that it was all wanted in the cabin, but that if they wanted it very badly, we might come to some amicable arrangement, and in the meantime they might let me have a look at their collection of Chinese curios."

The result of it all was that the men got their favourite beverage and Nosey got some nice souvenirs of a happy voyage.

The last time I met him was at the beginning of the War when with another retired Bengal Pilot, H. S. Tozer, I was working in the recruiting office at Eastbourne. Tozer suddenly exclaimed: "Why, here's old Nosey!" He was standing in the doorway with a small fluffy dog on a lead. He had not come to enlist, but having heard that we were there had come to pay us a visit. He explained that he was staying with an elderly aunt, and amongst other things took her little dog for a walk. He had retired from the sea and, I believe, died not long afterwards. He was really a very good-natured, kindhearted man, like most seafarers.

The China mail steamers were always pleasant vessels to pilot. They smelt of camphor. Their deck passengers were an interesting crowd to study and the men in command were nice people to meet. Galsworthy, who commanded the *Kowshing* when she was sunk by the Japanese, and George Payne, who had the *Kutsang* and was afterwards Marine Superintendent at Shanghai, were both extremely pleasant men to pilot.

I made an involuntary voyage to Penang in the *Kutsang* with Captain Payne. On arriving at the Sandheads outward bound the brig refused to take me out. It was blowing hard and there was a big sea running, and they would not put the boat out. I went close to the brig and hailed her, but it was no use, they would not launch the boat, so there was nothing for it but to go on to Penang. Payne made me very comfortable and in addition to his society I had that of a judge and his wife who were going for

a trip to Japan. I forget the name of the judge, but he was from Allahabad, and had a fund of anecdotes about cases he had tried. The divorce cases came to his court, and listening to his tales I acquired the conviction that a judge's work was not without its compensations and not all dull.

On arrival at Penang, Payne took me up the hill to admire the gardens, and afterwards to the club where we played whist and spent a pleasant evening, returning to the steamer to sleep. When we got on board Payne was annoyed to find his boy dead drunk and asleep in his master's bed. He had told the boy to make the bed on a stretcher on the upper bridge for coolness, and after making it up the boy had turned into it. However, apart from this little weakness, he was really a very superior boy. Some months previously when the *Kutsang* was lying at Calcutta I had gone on board to see Payne, and had asked the boy in my best pidgin whether the captain was on board. This is how I framed my question :

“ That piecee captain belong topside ? ”

To which the boy replied very politely, “ Captain Payne is in his cabin, sir, and I will acquaint him with your arrival.”

I remarked to Payne that his boy spoke English very well and was told that he was equally good at French.

Captain Galsworthy's account of the sinking of the *Kowshing* by a Japanese cruiser was most interesting. The *Kowshing* was carrying a regiment of Chinese soldiers, and the Chinese officer in command refused to surrender, when summoned to do so by the Japanese. Galsworthy tried to make the Chinamen understand that resistance was out of the question to a vessel which could blow them out of the water with two or three shells, but the Chinese are peculiar people and very limited in some ways, and the old Chinese colonel said that he had a thousand men all well armed, and he was not going to surrender.

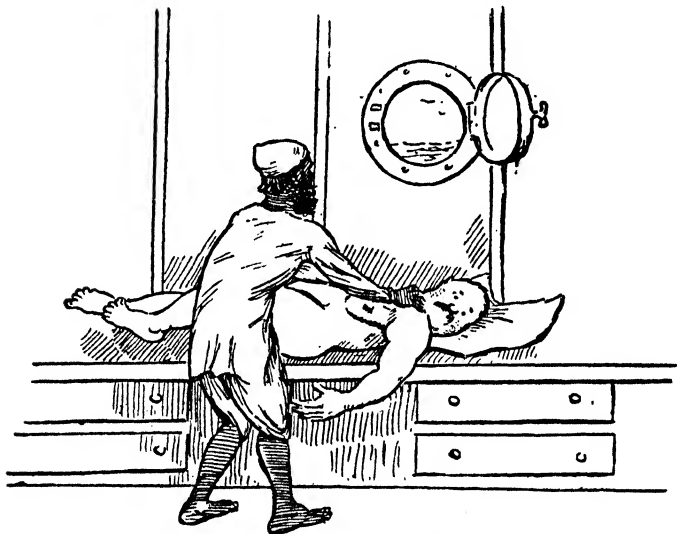
The cruiser gave the English officers and crew ten minutes in which to clear out and leave the vessel ; but the

Chinese would not let them launch a boat. When the time limit had expired the cruiser opened fire, the first shell entering the engine-room and blowing up the boilers. There was nothing for it but to jump overboard, which the officers and crew immediately did, the Chinese firing at them as they swam away. Galsworthy told me that he kept under the surface as much as possible, only coming up to breathe, and then going under again. He pointed to a fat old Chinese quartermaster who, he said, was with him in the *Kowshing*, and swam away with a bucket over his head which he thought would protect him. The bucket was hit once or twice, but by good luck the man's head escaped damage. The cruiser then closed with the sinking steamer and raked the thickly-packed decks with machine-guns. The vessel, of course, soon foundered, and Galsworthy with most of his crew were picked up by boats from the cruiser. I think he said that he was over an hour in the water. They were taken to Japan and eventually returned to Hong Kong. Galsworthy told me that he had put in a claim for compensation through the Foreign Office, but I never heard whether he got anything out of it.

It was not until some years after I had joined the Service that the German flag appeared on the river, the only foreign vessels trading to Calcutta in the 'seventies being the French barques, the small steamer of the Messagerie Maritime Cie, which ran between Calcutta and Colombo in connection with the larger French steamers running to the Far East, an occasional steamer of the Austrian Lloyd, and now and then an American sailing vessel. But in the 'eighties some steamers of the German Hansa Line put in an appearance. One of the first to visit the port was the *Gutenfels*, commanded by a very stout captain. I piloted him several times. It was a hot day in the month of June when I boarded the *Gutenfels* for the first time at the Sandheads and made the acquaintance of her portly commander.

As we steamed up-channel I had occasion to call my

servant to fetch me something. As he did not answer my whistle, I went down to look for him, and was amused to find him massaging the fat man, who had removed all his clothing and was lying a great pink mass of flesh which my old boy Ali was kneading, pounding and slapping like a professional *masseur*. The captain turned his bloodshot



ALI MASSAGING THE CAPTAIN

eyes on me as I stood in the doorway and ejaculated in a choking voice, "*Mein Gott*, Pilot, it is *gut*." As we were anchoring at Saugor I drew the captain's attention to some deer standing on the shore. He looked at them through his glasses and shouted excitedly, "And they have got kittens with them!" He meant fawns, of course.

The German steamers of the Hansa Line soon became more frequent visitors, and before many years had elapsed were carrying quite a large slice of the trade of the port. The later ones were fine steamers, with plenty of power and easy to handle. I always liked piloting them.

CHAPTER XVIII

Norwegian ships—The female cook—Dynamiting fish—A narrow escape—The sole survivor—Eaten by sharks—Catching a big shark—A hungry ship—"We are starving"—Gems on the beach—The missing steward and the refrigerator.

IN my slack time on board the brig I had amused myself by studying French and Italian, and on boarding a steamer of either of those nationalities I made a point of asking the people not to speak to me in English and to bear with my efforts to converse with them in their own language, which they very kindly did. In this way I often got a free lesson, and I retain many pleasant recollections of my journeys up and down the river in foreign steamers.

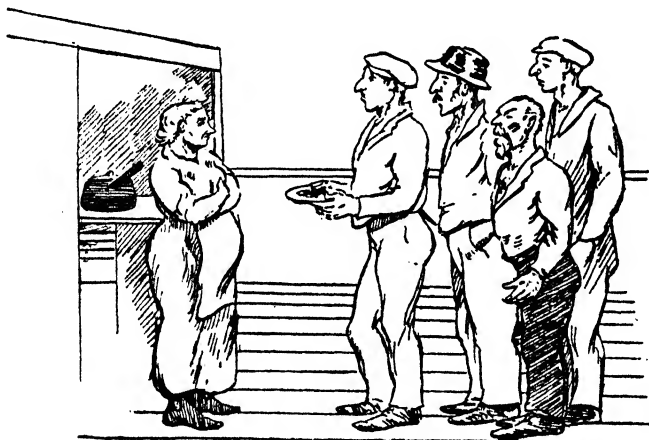
The Norwegian steamers carried a female cook and stewardess, and on one of these vessels there was an old cook who was a fierce creature of whom the crew were quite frightened. As soon as we anchored at the Huldia tripod in the afternoon the men trooped aft to the galley to remonstrate with the old lady about the way in which she had cooked their hash. I was on the bridge at the time, and the captain drew my attention to the little comedy.

The men came along timidly, huddled together, one of them carrying the offending mess on a dish. "You wait," said the captain; "she give them what for." I looked at the woman, who was standing at the galley door waiting for them with folded arms and a very grim expression on her aged countenance.

They made their complaint, and she replied. I could not of course understand what was said, but her address was pitched in a shrill scream and was evidently to the point, for after one or two feeble efforts to arrest the flow of

eloquence, or vituperation, the poor fellows slunk away looking very discouraged, and she was left mistress of the field. The captain sadly admitted that he himself was afraid of her.

The stewardess on this ship was a thin, gaunt, middle-aged woman who looked quite the typical old maid, and I wondered how she came to be afloat. She seemed rather inefficient. The cabin looked as though it would have been all the better for a good wash. Any rubbish was merely swept into the corners.



THE DEPUTATION TO THE COOK

In the morning, as we should not be leaving until about nine o'clock, I proposed to the captain that we should go for a stroll ashore with the gun. We walked to a village about half a mile from the shore, where we excited a great deal of interest, white people being rarities in the neighbourhood. Probably few of the villagers had ever seen one at such close quarters. The Norwegian skipper was much taken with the appearance of a pretty little girl about four years old who was staring with round-eyed wonder at the

strange intruders. He thought she would look pretty playing about the cabin, and asked me if I thought that they would sell her. I thought not, and when I said jokingly to the headman of the village that the captain would like to buy her, a woman darted forward, snatched up the child, and ran away with her.

As a Senior Master Pilot I found plenty of work to do and was kept very busy : a day or two in town, a day or two on the brig, and the rest of the time on the river on vessels of all sorts, shapes and sizes. At the end of the month I was unable to give off-hand the names of the different ships and steamers which I had piloted, unless I first glanced over the little bundle of pilotage certificates which had to be attached to my pay-bill. As soon as I had finished with a vessel I forgot all about her and became interested in the next bit of work, unless, of course, some unusual incident occurred to impress my memory.

In this way I recollect sailing into Saugor on board the three-masted ship *Victoria Regina*, deep laden with a cargo of salt. There was a light southerly wind, which died away altogether when we were abreast of the Intermediate Light, and as we were not stemming the ebb tide I dropped the anchor, gave her a short scope of chain, and waited for the breeze to freshen. I remember that we merely hauled up the courses and clewed up the topgallantsails, leaving the topsails set. Seated together on the poop the captain, whose name I think was Cawsey, was telling me about the weather he had experienced during his voyage, when I noticed several shoals of fish drifting past with the tide and remarked that a stick of dynamite exploded in such a shoal would probably yield a rich harvest. The captain said that he had some dynamite and time-fuses on board and would try a stick.

Having got his stick of dynamite and inserted his fuse he proceeded to ignite it, and having done so began a long yarn about dynamite and fuses, waving the thing about in the air while he discoursed. I knew nothing about

floating off into deep water as the tide rose. There were at first five of them left clinging to the keel of the *dhow*, but first one man and then another lost his hold or was washed off, and when the morning broke he, the *nacoda*, and the *nacoda's* son, were the only members of the crew still surviving. The wind had moderated but the sea was still rough and breaking, and it took them all they knew to keep themselves from being washed off the wreck.

To add to their misery they were now surrounded by sharks, which tried to reach them with each wave that washed over the vessel. He said that some of these sharks were very large and came half out of the water in their efforts to secure a meal.

The boy, who was exhausted and very frightened, suddenly let go his hold, and was torn to pieces by the monsters, who fought over him, churning up the blood-stained water all round them.

The old *nacoda* then appears to have gone out of his mind, for he rose to his feet and leapt into the sea, where he was promptly devoured by the sharks.

The weather continued to moderate, and the survivor was able to retain his position on the keel of the *dhow* until the *Matterhorn* came along and sent a boat to take him off.

We remained at anchor that night as there was no wind, but I did not get much sleep, because the poor boatswain made such a noise calling out and talking to himself all the time. The following day a tug came down and we towed up.

About a fortnight later, being in Calcutta, I went to the General Hospital, where the boatswain had been taken as soon as the *Matterhorn* arrived in Port, and very much to my surprise found that he was well on the road to recovery. He was a fine, strong, healthy man.

Sharks are plentiful at the Sandheads. When lying at anchor in the brigs we often used to catch them. They appear to be always hungry and willing to feed on anything

that comes their way, whether digestible or not, and I have found inside them empty sardine tins, bits of wood, and sheep's feet, none of which could possibly have done them any good. Lying at anchor at Saugor in one of Brocklebank's ships I noticed several big fish swimming about under the counter and suggested that we might as well try to catch them. There was no proper sharkhook on board, but the carpenter made one from a chain hook, which we baited with a piece of salt horse and cast over the stern. It was immediately grabbed by one of them, but as the hook had no barb, he shook himself free as soon as we hauled on the line. Nothing daunted, another one tried his luck, and also shook himself off. Four or five of them did the same, but at last we pulled one fellow's head out of the water and managed to get him on board. He was about six feet long.

One hot night on the brig lying at anchor, I came on deck to get a little fresh air. There was nobody about except the anchor watch, and nothing in sight but the stars and the Light vessel. It was all very quiet and peaceful. I lit a cheroot and sat down on the after-grating where there seemed to be a little more air. Aft the quarter gallery, which was used as a signal locker, there was fixed a reel with a good length of two and half-inch coir rope. When lying at anchor in a strong tide, if the boat was unable to fetch back, a lifebuoy would be fastened to this rope and veered away until the boat caught it, and could be hauled alongside.

A big shark had been lying under the stern in the afternoon, and the sharkhook had been attached to the boat line and put over, baited with a fowl which had died a natural death and was not therefore regarded as fit for culinary purposes. Whether the fish was not hungry, or did not care for poultry, or was more cautious than the generality of his kind it is impossible to say, but the tempting morsel had been left untouched for hours and nobody was paying any attention to the line. I had

forgotten all about it, had nearly finished my smoke and was thinking about turning in again, when suddenly the reel began to revolve and the line to run out. Catching hold of it I took a turn round the cleat which was under the rail, and held on.

From the strain on the line it was evident that we had caught something big which was struggling hard to escape, or to break the line ; but two and a half-inch coir takes a lot of breaking. Whenever the line eased up I took in the slack, and held on again. The watch now came to my assistance, and by degrees we hauled our prey close up under the stern and managed to lift his head and shoulders out of the water, when we slipped a running noose over his head, triced it nearly up to the rail, and made fast.

When I turned out in the morning he was dead and being hauled on board. He measured over eleven feet in length, and was the biggest shark that I have seen on deck.

But a much larger one was caught by the Mutlah light-ship. He had been haunting the Light for days and had refused to touch any of the bait offered him. The crew of the Light were getting quite rattled about him, as some of the older lascars declared that his persistence in keeping close to the vessel was a sure sign that one of them was about to die and afford him a funeral feast. Finding the sharkhook of no avail, the captain made a dummy lascar of some old clothing stuffed with straw. This he fastened to a line, and having planted himself by the gangway with the grains or three-pronged harpoon in his hand, told the men to throw the dummy overboard from the forecastle.

The ruse proved successful. As the dummy struck the water the shark rushed at it, turning over on his back and exposing his white under-skin as he opened his jaws and prepared to seize his victim. The captain made a lucky hit and the grains went well home in his lower jaw. The line attached held good until a running bowline was dropped over his shoulders, and the delighted crew, after much hauling and the use of tackles, got him on deck. He

measured twenty-one feet, and his vertebræ were sent up to the Calcutta Museum, where they probably still are.

We were always hospitably received and treated on vessels arriving at the Sandheads. The sailing ships invariably saved up a fowl with which to regale the pilot, although in the case of a ship coming off a long voyage the poor bird may have led a lonely life in the hencoop for weeks, all its brothers and sisters having been cooked long since.

But I was once put on board a French barque where the crew were nearly at the end of their tether. She had made a long passage, and had been more than a month working up the Bay with calms and light northerly winds. We anchored in the Channel on the ebb, and I joined them in the cabin for the evening meal, which to my surprise consisted of scraps of biscuit and a small jampot containing pieces of bacon rind and what looked like lard. This was passed to me first as I was the guest, and when I declined it with thanks the captain assured me that it was delicious. I was not hungry, but the others ate it with their biscuit and evidently enjoyed it. There was no other course. I stuck to biscuits, and there was plenty of good red wine. Fortunately we got a tug at Saugor, and I only had three days of short commons.

Another little vessel which arrived at the Sandheads with no food on board was the barque *William Wilson*, built of iron, and of about five hundred tons register. I was a Senior Master Pilot at the time, and having arrived at Calcutta just before Christmas, on return from long leave to England, I decided to go down passenger to the brig, and start work again. My wife, who had returned with me from home, wished me to stay in town until after Christmas, but I was anxious to get into harness again after my long spell of idleness and was not to be persuaded. I went down in one of the Asiatic steamers, her pilot kindly pointing out the changes which had occurred during my absence, and telling me of all the interesting things which had happened

to our mutual friends while I had been out of our little world.

On arrival at the brig, I found that all of the junior pilots had availed themselves of 'Christmas leave' and had gone to town 'passenger,' to spend the festive season, leaving four Branch Pilots, and two Master Pilots besides myself, to take any vessels which might arrive.

During the night the other two Master Pilots were put on board two steamers of their tonnage which had come in, and I found myself with the first turn for everything under two thousand tons. In the course of the morning the look-out reported a sail to the southward, and I immediately became interested, for that sail was probably coming in for my benefit.

When it became visible from the deck, I made it out to be a small barque which was slowly working up to us against the north-east breeze. The wind freshened, and after tacking several times she was close enough for us to read a signal which she had flying. It said, "We are starving."

When I pulled alongside her in the afternoon, I was accompanied by a bag of rice and a supply of biscuits. She was from Durban with a number of returned coolies on board. They were people who had emigrated to Natal, and having made a little money as small shopkeepers were returning to their native land. The captain told me that they had been on short rations for weeks, and were practically at the end of their resources. He also said significantly that I would not be able to find any rats on board. I did not want to find any rats, all I wanted to do was get the barque to Calcutta as soon as possible. She was drawing about ten feet, and my Christmas dinner consisted of rice and one or two sardines. The laugh was distinctly against me. But the coolies were very glad to get that bag of rice, and we were lucky enough to pick up a tug on the following day.

We had returned from England, after my long leave that time, in the British India steamer *Chyebassa*, Captain A. B.

Cave. It was a long passage, for we seemed to stop at every port on our route, and amongst other places found our way to Trincomalee with a consignment of Government stores. I had not seen the place before, and thought it very beautiful. In the morning as we lay at anchor some of the inhabitants came off in their boats to sell walking-sticks and precious stones. These latter were uncut gems of large size and all the colours. The ladies were greatly interested, and the wife of Mr. B——, a merchant of Rangoon, was particularly anxious to possess some. The voyage as I said had been long, and Mr. B—— like the rest of us had spent most of his pocket-money in going ashore at other ports, in playing cards, or in paying his weekly liquor bill, and he was not in a position to gratify his wife's fancy. There were tears, and B—— looked so moody and distressed that I suggested a walk ashore to look at the old Dutch Fort. We hailed a boat and pulled for the beach. At the water's edge was a long line of dead jellyfish, but having waded through this we reached a sandy expanse covered with little pebbles of all the colours of the rainbow. It was a startling discovery and I cried to B——, "Why, these are the uncut gems!"

Fortunately we had some paper, and in a very short time we had collected neat little packets of rubies, amethysts, lapis lazuli, sapphires and emeralds. At least they had all the appearance of those precious stones in a rough state, and we were delighted with our find, but not so overjoyed as Mrs. B—— was when, after visiting the interesting old fort, we returned on board and B—— handed over his magnificent peace offering. It was well worth all the trouble we had taken to hear Mrs. B——'s cry of joy as she flung her arms round B——'s neck and kissed him.

She asked him how much he had paid for them. Said he evasively, "It's lucky we didn't buy any here: they were much cheaper on shore!" Which, of course, was perfectly true.

One other incident of that voyage occurs to me. The

saloon of the *Chyebassa*, as on most passenger steamers of the period, was situated aft. It had a long table running down the centre, and on either side was a row of cabins. At the forward end of the saloon was situated the refrigerating or cold-storage room. Whenever this latter was opened it emitted an ancient and fishlike odour, which was much resented by the passengers, especially those whose appetite, owing to the motion of the vessel, was in a delicate and uncertain condition. The captain presided at the head of the table, and was a cheery and genial host.

One day the captain was relating how, on the previous voyage, the chief steward had suddenly and mysteriously disappeared. They had hunted all over the vessel for him, but he was not to be found, and had to be written off. The passengers listened with sympathy to the sad tale; then one old lady of dyspeptic appearance looked gloomily at the captain and said, even more gloomily, "*Have you looked in that refrigerating room?*"

Captain Cave affected not to hear her, but a shudder went round the table at the awful possibility of the dead steward being mixed up with the eatables in the cold storage.

CHAPTER XIX

An unpleasant night—Mastering the Greek language—The “turret” steamers—The mate of the *Aislaby*—The case of the *Mignonette*—The ex-actor mate—The *Chemnitz*—Mr. Woodruffe and the man-of-war—Dynamite in a thunderstorm.

ONE of the most unpleasant nights which I can recollect was spent on board a ship named the *Earl Spencer*, which fell to my turn in town. I forget who took her up to Calcutta, but it was not me. She had been a steamer, and her engines and propeller had been removed, and she had been rigged as a ship. The tug *Dalhousie*, Captain Sampson, towed us down and we had no trouble of any kind on our way down the river, getting to Kulpee the first day and out to sea on the second. The weather was not too good as we passed Saugor—hard monsoon weather, with occasional heavy squalls, and after passing the Lower Gasper we found quite a big sea running. While the ebb tide lasted we made fairly good progress, but by the time that we were midway between the Intermediate and the Eastern Channel Lights we met the flood, and it was not until about nine o'clock at night that the *Dalhousie* pulled us to abreast of the latter, when Sampson blew his whistle and hailed us through his megaphone to let go the hawsers. At least I concluded that that was what he wanted us to do, although I could not make out what he was saying. The tug had eased down and kept on whistling, so although I would rather have been towed a mile or two south of the Light I told the men to let go the hawsers and to loose the topsails and foresail. We already had the fore and main staysails set. They were a long time getting the sail on her, and by the time they had hoisted the topsails we had

drifted close to the Light. We could not have weathered it, so I put the helm up and passed to leeward.

We set the foresail and stood down close hauled on the starboard tack. It was blowing a gale from south-south-west and we had a succession of squalls to which we had to lower the upper topsails, hoisting them again after the squall had passed. She was not too well manned and the men seemed played out after an hour or two of this sort of thing, but I could see that she was not too weatherly and that we must carry as much sail as possible if we were to reach the brig by daylight.

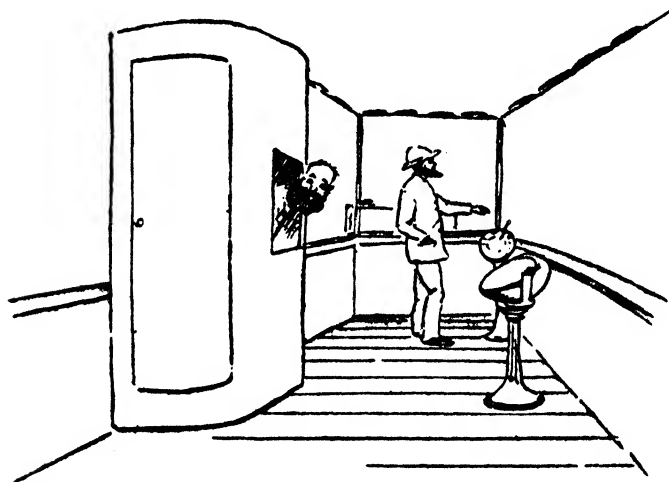
Having stood down for two or three hours, and the flood tide being finished, we wore round and stood to the westward, the weather if anything getting worse. She certainly was not too weatherly, for we only weathered the Light by about a mile.

I stood on until the Light bore east-south-east and then went round again, and we set the main topgallantsail, which was just about as much as she could carry. I had seen nothing of the brigs, but as the daylight came in I made out the Buoy brig hull down to windward. We stood to the westward again and put the mainsail on her, which certainly sent her through the water, but she was a regular crab on a wind and went to leeward in a most disheartening manner. It was evident that she had not been built to sail. But about noon the brig took compassion on us and ran down to where we were. I was very glad to be taken out and grateful to Mr. Rayner, who was in command of the Buoy brig.

Greek vessels were almost unknown on the Hooghly, but I recollect being sent on board a green-painted tramp steamer, the *Marietta Ralli*, which flew the Greek flag. I always made a practice of giving my orders to the helmsman in the language to which he was accustomed, instead of giving them in English to be translated by the officer of the watch. Before doing so on this occasion I had to learn them myself. I therefore asked the captain, who spoke

English, what I was to say if I wanted to direct the vessel's course to starboard. He replied, "*A dexia*," and to port, "*A ristera*." Steady was translated "*Grami*."

My traps having been hoisted on board, and the book filled in, I called out, "*A dexia*!" I could not see the wheel or the steersman as they were concealed in a little round wheelhouse situated in the centre of the bridge, but a



A DEXIA

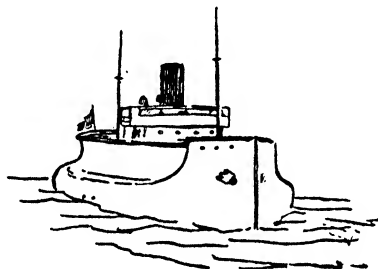
face surrounded with black whiskers and beard suddenly shot out from an opening in the wheelhouse and grinned at me, displaying a fine set of glittering white teeth. He had evidently been startled by my foreign accent. I looked firmly at him and repeated, "*A dexia*!"

The face disappeared and I heard the wheel going over, so I knew that I had mastered the Greek language, as far as my requirements were concerned, and that all was well.

English vessels are different from foreigners in that we say "Port the helm" when we want to direct the course to

starboard ; but if we wish to go to starboard on a foreigner we simply say "Starboard," or its equivalent, and take no account of what the helm does. This little difference very nearly put me ashore one day when I was taking down an English steamer. It so happened that I had just been piloting a succession of foreign vessels. I had taken down an Italian steamer and brought up a German one. On the Italian if I wanted to go to the left the order had been "*Sinistra*," on the German, "*Links*."

Now, in the English steamer going round Sankraal Bight



A TURRET STEAMER

I wanted to go to the left, and instead of saying "Starboard," or "Starboard the helm," I said "Port." I saw the man putting the helm to port, and called out to him, "I said *port*!" He looked surprised and replied, "I'm putting the helm to port." I tumbled to my mistake at once, got the helm over the other way quickly, and nothing happened. But it was a warning to me to keep my wits about me.

When the 'turret' steamers came on the scene they were regarded by us with mixed feelings. They were easy to handle and steered well, but they did not draw much water when laden, which was a serious defect in our eyes, as our remuneration was based on the vessel's draught, and with a heavy sea running they were awkward to board or to leave when deep-loaded, for the platform alongside which the

boat had to lie was only a foot or so above the surface and would be submerged with each successive wave. These vessels were designed to reduce the registered tonnage on which port dues and other charges were based. In the formula for calculating a steamer's tonnage the width of the deck was taken into consideration, and in the turret steamers this width was reduced to a minimum.

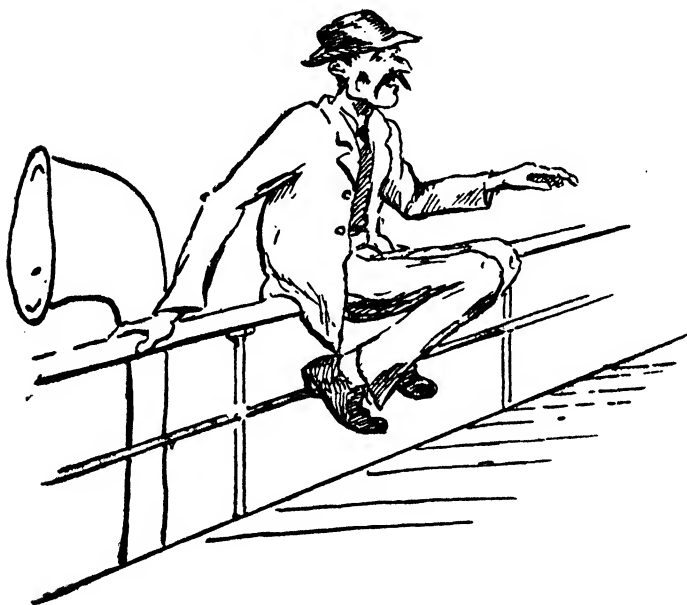
When going out from Saugor in the south-west monsoon the turret steamer with each sea which she encountered would pick up tons of water which would rush along the platform and, as she lifted, cascade back again to where it belonged with a continual roar and din. This was the reverse of restful, but the people of the vessel were accustomed to it, just as a miller gets used to the sound of his mill wheel and does not notice it.

Of all the tramp steamers which I have taken up the river, the *Aislaby* was probably the most uncomfortable. She had a very narrow bridge which rendered it difficult to get away from the venerable steering engine which emitted steam from all sorts of unexpected places whenever the helm went over with a banging and clanging that made one wonder how much longer it was going to hang together before going out of action. The bridge was surmounted by an ancient awning, so threadbare that an observation of the sun might have been taken through it. The funnel was close abaft the bridge, and as we slowly wended our way to Calcutta the following breeze came to us several degrees hotter than it need have been, and flavoured with mephitic vapours from the stokehole.

But my chief reason for remembering the *Aislaby* was her mate. He was a tall, spare-built old man with one eye, reminding one involuntarily of the Ancient Mariner, and, like the Ancient Mariner, he had some pretty grim stories of the sea to relate. Perched on the bridge-rail he regaled me with tales of disaster to the various vessels in which he had sailed. In each case, whether the trouble was shipwreck, collision, or fire, he appeared to have played the leading

rôle and to have been on watch when the disaster occurred. He certainly was no mascot, although he seemed to have led a charmed life and to have been extraordinarily lucky personally ; for on one or two of the occasions he was the sole survivor.

We anchored for the night in the upper reaches, and on



THE MATE OF THE " AISLABY "

leaving at daybreak I found that the mechanism for lifting the anchor was in keeping with everything else on board. There was no direct steam to the windlass, which had to be worked from one of the winches by means of a ' messenger ' or endless chain which clattered and thumped as it did its work. One of the links of the endless chain broke in halves, and I watched with interest the efforts of the old mate to repair it with a shackle while the crew looked on,

occasionally offering a word of advice and encouragement. Eventually the anchor was hove up, catted and fished, and we resumed our journey to the port.

On another occasion I made the acquaintance of a man who had been an actor in one of the tragedies of the sea. He was the second mate of a steamer which I was taking up the Eastern Channel. It was night and we were slowly making our way over the ebb tide with the idea of arriving at Saugor somewhere about daybreak, and proceeding to Calcutta with the first of the flood. To pass the time and to keep myself awake I got into conversation with the officer of the watch, who seemed at first to be rather a taciturn person. But he suddenly asked me whether I remembered the case of the yacht *Mignonette*.

I remembered it very well. Two men and a boy formed the crew of the *Mignonette*, a small yacht which they were sailing out to hand over to the purchaser in Australia. They encountered very heavy weather, and the yacht was so badly knocked about by the sea that it foundered, but the crew had time to take to their boat. The two men were picked up and rescued by a passing vessel when they were at the last gasp and nearly dead from hunger and thirst, but the boy had disappeared. The men, to calm their troubled consciences, confessed that they had killed and eaten the boy Peter. They stood their trial at the Old Bailey, were sentenced to death, and subsequently pardoned in view of the circumstances of the case.

The officer of the watch told me that he was one of these two men. He said that the boy was so ill and weak that he could not in any case have lasted much longer. He also added the information that when the judge before passing sentence asked them if they had anything to say, his companion looked at the portly row of jurymen and exclaimed, "I don't suppose any of you gentlemen have ever been *really* hungry."

Having told his tale the officer relapsed into silence and appeared to be absorbed in his own reflections during the

remainder of his watch. I have sometimes wondered whether he really was one of the two unfortunate men who were constrained to cannibalism, or whether he was pulling my leg. If the latter he was certainly a good actor, for at the time he impressed me with his sincerity.

I did meet an actor on another steamer which I was taking down the river one Christmas Eve and had anchored for the night at Fisherman's Point. I had left orders that I was to be called when the vessel began to swing at the change of tide.

When the quartermaster turned me out in the small hours with the news that she had started to swing, I got into a thick coat, for it was quite chilly, and made my way to the bridge, where I found on watch a very stout officer whom I had not noticed before. It was a calm, still night, the moon shining softly through the usual cold weather mist on the tall trees and village huts of Fisherman's Point. The far-off wail of a jackal seemed to accentuate the general effect of peace and quietness. The steamer was evidently going to take her own time about swinging, and having canted across the river she remained in that position without any regard for my desire to get back to bed again.

I lit a cheroot and remarked to the officer that it was a fine night. He agreed, and said, "Very different with me at this time last year!" He sighed and continued, "I was King Pippin in the Christmas pantomime at Blackpool. But it's a messing game playing to kids."

He did not explain why it was a messing game, and I did not like to recall any painful recollections by asking him whether his royal mantle had been sullied by a well-directed egg. Anyway he had retired from the profession and was once more afloat.

I asked him whether he had filled any other leading rôles such as "Hamlet," or the dismal jockey in "The Arcadians." He had not played either of those parts, but he had been one of the two Corsican Brothers, and the

memories connected with that performance seemed to have a depressing effect on him.

The steamer having by now got three-quarters of the way round, and the possibility of her tailing the sand no longer a matter of anxiety, I wished him the compliments of the season and retired to my bed in the chart-house.

At certain seasons of the year, and principally at the end of the dry season and before the freshets had commenced to do their useful work of scouring out the channels and improving the tracks over the bars in the upper reaches of the river, we found it necessary to limit the draught of vessels leaving the port. As we were paid according to the vessel's draught we naturally gave them as deep a draught as possible, and the fact that we did so was generally understood and appreciated by the captains and agents. But not always, as I discovered in the case of a German steamer, the *Chemnitz*, which I took up with a cargo of horses from Australia. They were a poor lot of horses in bad condition, and the captain told me that they were a poor lot when they came on board, and that many of them had died on the voyage. He also told me that they had lost the boatswain overboard a couple of days before. There were a number of horses standing on either side of the boat deck, and the boatswain was going along outside the rail with the hose and washing down, when one of the horses kicked him overboard.

Nothing worth noting occurred during our passage up the river. I handed over to the Harbour Master and the *Chemnitz* was berthed at the usual moorings off the remount dépôt. A week or ten days elapsed, during which I piloted one or two other vessels, and then I learnt that the *Chemnitz* was nearly loaded and wanted me to fix a draught. The Eastern Gut had been shoaling up, the neap tides were coming on, and the consensus of expert opinion was to the effect that twenty-three feet was the utmost we could expect over the bar in two days' time. I accordingly told them that they might load to twenty-two feet six, but that

they would do better to restrict the draught to twenty-two feet, as there was a possibility of the bar shoaling still more. The captain wanted to load to twenty-four feet, and said that he understood that we always kept a foot up our sleeves. I assured him that that was not the case, and that if he exceeded the limit which I had given him, his vessel might have to wait until the next spring tides, or unload.

When I boarded the *Chemnitz* in Garden Reach to take her away I found to my disgust that she was drawing twenty-three feet six, and I was very much inclined to go ashore again. However, I decided to go and have a look at it; the tide might rise better than the forecast, as there was a good southerly wind, or the bar might open out a few inches, though this latter contingency was unlikely.

As we passed Fultah Point the blackboard on the bank used by the Hooghly Point *serang* to show the very latest soundings over the bar gave ten feet, a reduction of three inches on the previous day's report, while the semaphore at Hooghly Point registered thirteen feet three, the combined total making twenty-three feet three, or three inches less than we were drawing. It wanted another twenty minutes to high water, when possibly it might show another three inches.

I had a good look at the last sketch chart of the bar, and the shoalest bit certainly looked very narrow. I suppose it was really my duty to turn round and go back, but I went on instead, feeling by no means too happy. Abreast of Nurpur Point the semaphore did show the longed-for three inches, and I sent word down to the engine-room to "give her all they could." The high water ball went up at the same moment and dropped just as we approached the bar.

I had the marks dead on, of course, but she suddenly lost her way and looked as though she was going to stop. I looked at the skipper, who had gone rather pale and who cried out, "Vot is this, vot is this, Pilot?" I saw

she was still moving over the ground, and greatly to my relief was gathering way again, so I said to the captain, "That is the foot we keep up our sleeves." As we cleared the bar the semaphore showed a fall of three inches.

Of course I was quite in the wrong, and really ought not to have taken the risk. I can only recall one other occasion on which I did the same thing at the same place, but the steamer that time had a big rise of floor and we went over without noticing the bar at all.

This recalls a story which was told me by one of the senior pilots, with whom I was heaving the lead, of what happened to Mr. Woodruffe who was taking down a small man-of-war and who found on rounding Fultah Point that he would not have sufficient water to cross the Eastern Gut. It was first quarter-ebb and the tide falling fast. The only thing to do was turn and anchor in Nynan. He stopped the engines and told the First Lieutenant that when he gave the order to let go the anchor, he wanted them to hold on the chain as soon as the anchor touched bottom, and then give it to her link by link very slowly. The officer told the captain what the pilot wanted done, but the captain said, "Nonsense, give her thirty fathoms and hold on." The result was that the whole of the cable ran out and parted at the clinch. Mr. Woodruffe then asked to be allowed to anchor the vessel in his own way with the remaining anchor, pointing out that otherwise she would possibly be lost. He had his way, and having come-to, proceeded to write out a report of the loss of the anchor, and stated that instead of holding on to the chain as he ordered, they had let it run out to thirty fathoms when, of course, it was impossible to hold it and they lost the lot. Having written it out he took the report to the Captain for his signature, but that gentleman declined at first on the ground that he might be called upon to pay for the chain. But as Woodruffe refused to move the vessel until his report was signed he gave in and parted reluctantly

with his autograph. I never met Mr. Woodruffe, who had retired before I joined the Service, but I have heard this story more than once and have no reason to doubt it.

Inward-bound vessels had to discharge all explosives at the powder magazine, which was situated at Moyapur, nineteen miles below Calcutta. On boarding one of the German steamers of the Hansa Line, I was informed that she had on board a large consignment of dynamite, so I telegraphed the news from Saugor, and on reaching Moyapur turned round and anchored. In addition to the red-painted powder boat, two other cargo lighters came alongside, and the crew proceeded to get the cases of dynamite on deck. They were stout wooden boxes about eighteen inches long, and the men flung them on to the iron deck as cheerfully and carelessly as though they contained oranges. The captain assured me that it was quite safe to treat them in this manner, and that the stuff would not explode without detonators. I took his word for it, but soon after we had anchored a black bank of cloud formed to the north-west, and we got one of the most violent thunderstorms which I have ever experienced. Forked lightning of the most vicious-looking description seemed to be playing all round the steamer, and the captain's air of cheerful nonchalance disappeared.

As we sat together on the bridge watching the men pass the cases into the boats, I asked him, after one particularly wicked electrical explosion, what he thought would happen if the steamer was struck. He said that there would probably be a hole in the riverbed about half a mile deep. . . . Nothing of the sort happened, but I was very glad when it was all discharged, and we were able to go on our way to Garden Reach.

CHAPTER XX

The loss of *Anglia*—Colonel Crawford's account—Mr Elson and his observations—The sacred paper weight—Superstitious Bengalis—Snipe-shooting—The ghost train—The Indian problem—My model—Indian servants.

OF all the unfortunate happenings on the river during my time probably the most tragic was the loss of the *Anglia* at Mud Point anchorage on August 24th, 1892. She was a steamer of 2,120 tons register belonging to the Anchor Line, and left Calcutta with a general cargo, in pilotage charge of Mr. S. R. Elson, Branch Pilot, and was lost when turning to anchor at Mud Point.

When a pilot decided to 'come-to' at that anchorage he would get as close as possible to the western side of the channel and turn with starboard helm to the eastward. The reason for this was that the ebb tide ran much more strongly down the western side of the channel than on the eastern, where it was comparatively slack. The recent sketch charts issued at the time showed that a lump had formed in the channel rather to the west of the centre, and it was necessary to turn either well above the lump or pass it and turn below it.

Mr. Elson elected to turn and anchor below the lump; but as the steamer came round, and was athwart the channel, she took the ground and capsized immediately. At the court of enquiry which sat to investigate the cause of the accident, it was held that the lump had shifted its position and formed lower down.

On taking the ground the *Anglia* went completely over, putting her funnel in the water. Of the crew of thirty-nine

men, five were in the forecastle at the time of the disaster. The forecastle doors became jammed and the men were trapped. The port side of the forecastle remained above water, and the imprisoned men were able to put their heads through the scuttles, which were, however, too small for the men to climb through. The B.I.S.N. Company's steamer *Goa*, which was also bound down, anchored close to, sent her boats away to the wreck, and took the people off; but she could do nothing to help the unfortunate fellows trapped in the forecastle.

At first it was thought that it would be possible to cut through the iron plates of the forecastle and release them. The engineers of the *Goa*, with some of the engine-room staff, worked at the plates with cold chisels and encouraged the prisoners with a hope of speedy release. There was no time to waste, as the flood tide, when it made, would certainly cover the wreck entirely.

But after the plate had been cut through it was found that the plates were double, and that there was another, and thicker plate, under the top one. The engineers worked away with feverish haste, for it was now after low water and the tide beginning to rise; but they were unable to effect an entrance into the forecastle before the water covered it and flowed into the scuttles, drowning everyone inside. An attempt was made to pull one slightly-built man through one of the scuttles. They got him half-way out but were unable to extricate him altogether, as his pelvis would not come through the narrow opening. He implored them to push him back again as he was in agony, and they had to do so, and reluctantly abandon their efforts at rescue.

On the morning of August 25th I left Saugor in pilotage charge of the S.S. *Argus*, bound from Melbourne to Calcutta with horses. We started from Saugor on the first quarter-flood. It was raining and the visibility poor, but I sighted a white ship's boat bottom-up on the Mizen Sand, which was not yet covered by the rising tide. At the head of

the Eden Channel I met the S.S. *Goa* outward-bound, and saw that the pilot, Mr. Marshall, wanted to hail me. As we passed each other he told me to look out for a wreck in the channel. It was very thick but I kept a bright look-out, and suddenly sighted the two masts of the *Anglia* right ahead. I ported and passed to the eastward of her, feeling grateful to Marshall for the timely warning.

In *Bengal Past and Present* of July-December, 1909, there appeared an account of the loss of the *Anglia*, with a letter written by Lieut.-Colonel D. G. Crawford, M.B.,



S. R. ELSON

I.M.S., who was a passenger on board the steamer. The letter was written shortly after the occurrence, and I reproduce part of it here, as it gives a vivid description of what happened :

“ On the morning of the 24th, Wednesday, Booth took me down in a steam launch to Garden Reach, and I went on board the *Anglia*. There was also another passenger, a man called Mackenzie from one of the jute mills. As pilot we had Elson, who has the reputation of being the best man in the Service, with a young chap called Curran as his assistant or leadsman, and another pilot called Cox was going down to the pilot brigs as a passenger. All went well till we reached the bottom of the sandbank called the Jellingham Lump about twelve miles above Saugor Lighthouse. Here Elson meant to anchor for the

night, and the ship was just turning round to anchor with her head up-stream, when she touched the bottom, and in ten seconds or less, I should think, was down on her right side with her masts under water.

"At the time it happened I was standing in a passage on the upper deck, into which the companion ladder leading down into the cabin or saloon opens. Being a cargo boat she had no regular deckhouses or smoking saloon. I had been talking to Cox most of the day. He sometimes used to play football in the old Black Watch Club. He had just brought up from his cabin some photos of the Sunderbunds to show me (one minute later and he would have been drowned in his cabin to a certainty), and had just put the first into my hands when she touched. Cox said, 'She's aground; she'll right herself immediately.' But she heeled over further and further. When she got on her beam-ends, she seemed to hesitate for a second or so, as to whether she would go over or not, and then went right over on her side with her masts under water, from butt to top, and one side of her hull right out to the keel. A few minutes later her masts came out of water again, all but the first few feet above the deck. She was then on her side, at about a right angle to what she should have been, so that the rigging from the bulwarks to the mast was quite flat and level.

"When she began to heel over more and more, Cox and I scrambled out of the passage on to the side of the deck, which we reached just about the time she was hesitating as to whether she would go over any further. After that we found ourselves standing on the side of the captain's cabin, with the deck like a wall beside us. A railing across the part of the hurricane deck was standing up like a ladder by us. Cox called out, 'Up here, sharp,' and we went up it sharp, and found ourselves standing on the side of the ship. We were the first there, and were there, I should think, within one minute from the

time she struck. Men were pouring up on every side until there were twenty-one there in all,

"Most of those below had no possible chance of escape, but there was one man shut up in the wheelhouse above the captain's cabin who was got out after a little by two other men. She went over on her right side with her left side up. The only places from which it would have been possible to save anyone were the officers' cabins on the left and, as it happened, they were all empty at the time. There were four poor fellows shut up in the forecabin, but we could do nothing for them, as we had no implements but an axe. With this some men managed to wrench off the brass ring round the scuttle, but even then it was too small to let them through, and the poor fellows were drowned as the tide came up. The others must have been killed instantaneously at the first inrush of the water.

"Fifteen lives in all were lost, including the second engineer, chief steward, Elson's native servant, all the saloon waiters, who, of course, were below at the time, two sailors, and several firemen. One sailor jumped overboard and was drowned. Elson, the captain, the first and second officers, were all on the bridge at the time, which was the safest place they could have been in; the third officer also turned up from somewhere. There were several wonderful escapes. One was Curran, the leadman, who was heaving the lead on the right side of the ship. When the ship came over on top of him, he jumped into the river as far as he could, and swam, getting into the rigging as the masts came over. Also the men in the engine-room somehow were all washed up, though those who were in the stokehole were drowned. The other passenger, Mackenzie, was sitting on the upper side of the deck, and was up on the side before we were.

"When we got up there, that is those who escaped, the captain told us to get into the rigging or remain near it in case she rolled over any further, or in case she rolled

over on the other side. I sat up there for some time (it was really on a level with the side, not above the side at all), but after a while, seeing that the ship seemed firm enough, I came down again on to the side. The first and second officers' cabins were above water, and they managed to save a good deal of their kit, including a sextant and another instrument belonging to the chief officer. One of them also got out a box of cheroots, which he handed round. Somebody also got a lot of cork jackets from somewhere, and we each put one on.

"The B.I.S.S. *Goa*, the mail to Rangoon, was coming down the river behind us, and when we got settled, we saw her nearly abreast us. Some of the men began to wave jackets, etc., to her, but there was no use doing that, as they could not possibly help seeing us. Indeed some of the people on board her saw us go over. The place where we were was near the middle of the river, but rather to the Midnapur side, about five miles from Kedgerree, and perhaps seven from the Saugor Island side. The *Goa* came down a long way to the east of us, and then came slowly round to the south-west. Then she went away to the south-east and dropped a couple of boats. Then she went and anchored to the south-west. When her boats came within a quarter of a mile of us Cox hailed them, and told them not to try to come alongside, but to anchor there and wait till slack water, which they did. The river and the tide were running like a millrace round both sides of the *Anglia*, and boiling in and around the masts and rigging. Through this a boat would have had to come.

"Then after a while the chief officer and some men managed to cut away one of the *Anglia's* boats, and it floated, though it had not any rudder. Three of the boats were smashed up underneath her when she went over; the others were swung downwards towards the masts and funnel. Cox offered to take this boat out to communicate with the *Goa*, to try and get some tools,

to cut out the men shut up in the forecastle. The second officer took charge of the boat. Cox, Mackenzie and I went with him, also Curran, who was pulling an oar, and about eight men. We drifted and rowed down to one of the *Goa's* boats. Then they took their anchor and attached it to the *Anglia's* boat, while the *Goa's* boat took us to the *Goa*. We were very hospitably received on board the *Goa*, which we reached about 6.30 p.m. The captain, and the first and third officers, remained on the *Anglia* until 8.0, when they had to leave, too. All those who got on to the side of the ship were saved, and none of them seriously hurt."

Colonel Crawford goes on to say that the *Goa* transferred the survivors to the tug *Rescue* on the following day at Saugor, that the *Rescue* took them all up to Calcutta, and that he sailed for home in the S.S. *Dalmatia* a few days later. Curran, who was Mr. Elson's leadsman, became a pilot, and was in pilotage charge of the steamer *Deerpdale* when she was lost at Pir Serang crossing, touching the ground and capsizing as suddenly as the *Anglia* had done.

I have a sketch of Mr. Elson working at his signal book which I made on board the brig, and which is fairly like him. He was rather a remarkable person. He had been a bluejacket in the Navy, and had joined the Bengal Pilot Service as a licensed pilot, when the licensed service was started by the Government, as I have mentioned previously.

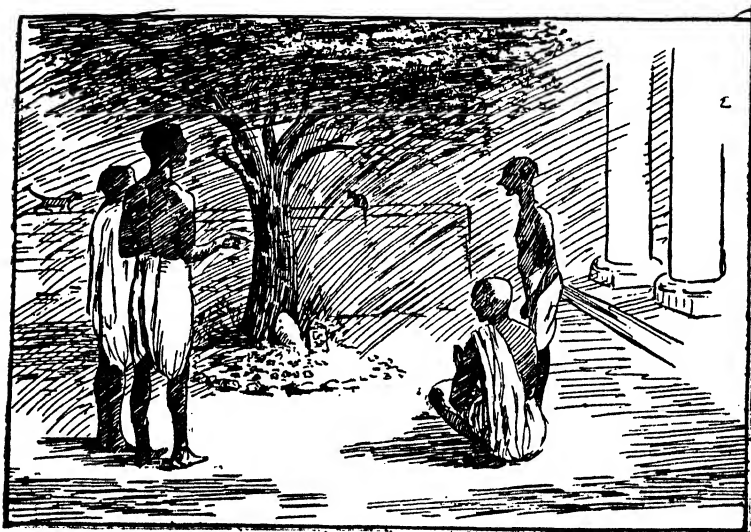
Not all the people thus introduced made good, but Mr. Elson was one of those who did so. He was a self-educated man, possessed of considerable ability. He compiled a very elaborate book of signals for the use of the Service, and wrote a guide to the Hooghly, which was a text-book for the leadsmen. He was also an authority on meteorology, and for years kept a record of the density of the water at the Sandheads, at different times of tide, and at the different seasons of the year. He used an

hydrometer which he had manufactured himself from a soda-water bottle weighted with lead inside, and he had some little discs of tin and lead which he used to slip over a pin stuck into the cork. When at the Sandheads he would draw up a bucket of water from alongside, measure the gravity carefully with his home-made instrument, and enter the reading in a little book reserved for the purpose. This he would do several times during the day.

On one occasion while he was leaning over the side, engaged in filling his bucket, a mischievous leadsman removed his soda-water bottle, to his intense annoyance. He said that he had been given to understand that the Service was now recruited from sons of gentlemen, but that he found himself as a matter of fact in the society of sons of female dogs. While he was thus relieving his feelings the bottle was deftly replaced, and the culprit tried to persuade him that it had been there all the time. As a leadsman, I hove the lead with him in many vessels, and found him very interesting. He had some amusing anecdotes to relate about his service on the China station when Sir Edward Pellew was in command.

For a time I shared the top flat over Traill's the printers in Mango Lane with two other members of my Service, who like myself were grass widowers, our respective wives being in England. The *durwan*, or gatekeeper, was a Hindu, a tall, good-looking man, and very devout. Just within the gateway of the entrance to Traill's stood a *peepul* tree, the sacred tree of the Hindus, and under the tree was placed a large, smooth, oblong stone to represent a *lingam*. The *durwan*, who kept the spot well swept, neat and tidy, spent most of his time seated under the *peepul*, resting. But at night, when we wanted to sleep, he became very wideawake indeed and would chant or recite long passages from one of his holy books in a loud but monotonous tone which, to a man who was trying to get some sleep, was simply maddening.

On the writing-desk in our sitting-room, and used as a paper-weight, stood a block of old red sandstone about eight inches high which had carved on it a deer and some figures, representing an incident in the life of Gautama Buddha. This block came from the great Buddhist Temple of Buddha Gaya, where it had perhaps been deposited by some devout pilgrim as a votive offering



THE SACRED STONE

some two thousand years ago. It had been given to me by a friend, who had received it from a relative who had been engaged in the work of restoring a part of the temple, which was in a state of dilapidation.

One very hot night, after we had turned in and were attempting to get some necessary sleep before turning out again at three o'clock to go on board our vessels in Garden Reach, the *durwan* began his evening hymn. After standing it patiently for half an hour or so my companion hailed him and asked him to desist. But the

durwan was wound up and in his religious fervour paid no attention whatever to the entreaty, but continued his monotonous chant, which rose with painful clearness on the hot, still air.

"Throw something at him, and then perhaps he will stop," I suggested. My fellow-sufferer grabbed something and flung it in the direction of the noise, which immediately ceased. "I hope it did not hit him," said my companion; "for it was that heavy paper-weight." I hoped so, too, but as silence now reigned we got off to sleep, and slept soundly enough until our boys called us with the intelligence that the *gharry* was waiting to take us to the *ghât*. Having dressed we went down. There we found the *durwan* standing in the moonlight under the *peepul* tree and showing to an interested knot of co-religionists the wonderful sacred stone which had suddenly fallen from the skies while he was engaged in his religious exercises, and which now held a place of honour next to the *lingam*. We did not claim it, for it had now fallen into the possession of one who valued it more highly than we did. The Bengalis are extraordinarily credulous and superstitious. They are firm believers in ghosts and goblins.

My principal relaxation when ashore was snipe-shooting. Nothing took one so completely away from the work on the river as a long day in the big open spaces, and I attribute the perfect health which I enjoyed during my thirty-five years' service on the Hooghly to my habit of getting away from the work and into the paddy fields whenever I could do so. For many years I retained the services of a *shikarry*, Kushoo, whose duty it was to explore the surrounding country while I was down the river, and to take me to some spot where I should be sure to find some birds, as soon as I returned to Calcutta.

He never failed me. On arriving after a long and tiring day's work, he would put in an appearance with the news that there were half a dozen couple of birds at Sam-

nugger, Naihati, or Chinsura, or perhaps down the Budge Budge road, and that we should have to start for the railway station very early on the following morning. If he said that there were half a dozen couple of birds, I knew that I should see that number and probably more.

It was on one of these excursions that I was amused by a discussion about ghosts, and impressed by the superstition of the Bengali peasants. We had caught an early train to Chinsura where we were joined by two coolies whom Kushoo had engaged as beaters, and with them we marched to the ground where he said he had located eight snipe. It was in July, very hot when it was not raining, and the paddy fields looking their best, a wide expanse of the most beautiful green, standing in about six inches of clear limpid water. I could never look at a paddy field without reflecting on the prodigious amount of labour which it represented. The rice was sown in small square patches, and when it had attained a height of nine or ten inches was transplanted over a stretch of many acres. Each stalk had to be planted separately and at a regular distance from the next. The amount of patient toil which this involved all over the rice-bearing districts of Bengal filled me with wonder and admiration. I was always extremely careful not to walk in such a manner as to damage the standing crop which had been planted with so much care.

On this occasion we found the birds scattered over a wide stretch of ground, about half a mile to a bird, and having bagged one or two, were glad to knock off for lunch and a little rest under the trees close to a village, inhabited by the people who had planted the rice.

While eating my sandwiches we were joined by a couple of young men clad simply in loincloths, who looked like field labourers; but Kushoo told me that they were the proprietors of the land round the village. Kushoo asked them about a ghost train which he understood was in the habit of running through Chinsura railway

station every night at a certain hour, and which he believed was causing some concern to the railway officials. They said that it was quite true, that it generally ran through the station without stopping, but that two nights ago the people at the station had watched its lights approaching, had seen it slow down and stop, and then suddenly disappear. That night an old resident of the village had died.

There was a large *peepul* tree close to where we were seated, and I asked whether it was haunted or inhabited by ghosts. They were not certain, but rather thought it was, and in any case would be very loath to climb into it at night.

One of the coolies then had a tale to tell of a long white form which had walked by his side one dark night, and did not leave him until he reached his hut. I asked him if he had been carrying any fish at the time. He was very indignant at the suggestion, and said, "Am I mad to walk about with fish at night to attract ghosts?" I think the belief in ghosts and evil spirits is pretty general in Bengal, where the people are extraordinarily ignorant. I always found the peasantry simple and inoffensive, and it was impossible not to like them. British rule has given them security of life and property; they are no longer harried by marauding bands of Pindaries, and improved communications have abolished famine. But this very security of life and property has permitted the population to increase enormously, and accentuated the struggle for existence.

The problem is a very difficult one indeed. I am quite sure that Swaraj is not going to solve it. They are probably in the same state of mental development as they were thousands of years ago. As a race they are suited to their environment, and are not likely to be displaced by any other race less suited to exist in the moist heat of Bengal. So they will probably persist for many thousands of years to come, and in some way perhaps things may

right themselves. Or will they always be overcrowded and compelled to accept a very low standard of living ?

Amongst the interesting Indians whom I came across during my long residence in the East, I recall a *sadhu* who sat to me as a model. I had always been fond of drawing, and when on long leave to England had become



THE COOLIE AND THE GHOST

a pupil of the late Mr. J. Crompton at Heatherley's in Newman Street, among my fellow-students being Laurence Koe and Gerald Ackerman. In Calcutta I studied under Mr. Jobbins and Mr. Havell, who were successively Principals of the Calcutta School of Art. In Mr. Havell's time a few of us formed a small art club, which was allowed to meet in the studio in the Calcutta Museum, and there

we drew for an hour or two, from the models engaged for the School of Art.

One afternoon the model failed to attend, and after waiting for a bit we told the *durwan* to bring in any passer-by who was willing to sit for four annas an hour. He returned in a few minutes accompanied by a tall, well-made man, with fine features and a black beard, who looked to be about thirty years of age. We gave him



THE SADHU MODEL

an easy sitting pose, for it is no use giving the amateur model any other.

I found him an interesting study, and when the meeting broke up asked the *sadhu* whether he would come and sit at my rooms on the following morning. He agreed, and I commenced a head in oil. He seemed very drowsy, his head kept nodding, and he nearly fell off the packing case on which he was perched. So to keep him awake I engaged him in conversation, and he told me his story.

He had been a landed proprietor in a small way in the North-West, having succeeded to an estate which had been in his family for many generations; but from one cause and another he got into debt and into the clutches of a moneylender. I could well imagine it, for he looked

a dreamy unpractical sort of man. In the end the money-lender took everything, and finding himself reduced to beggary, the erstwhile landed proprietor became a *sadhu* or religious mendicant. A pleasant enough life, and since adopting it he had wandered about all over India, and as far as Ceylon, visiting all the holy places which were worth visiting. He had just come from Puri, and was in Calcutta for a religious festival which was being held at Kali Ghât. I asked him what had become of his wife and family. He replied reverently, "*Khoda janta*"—"God knows."

I was in town for several days before being sent down the river again, and my friend turned up every morning for a sitting. At the close of the second sitting he drew my attention to a patch of skin trouble on his shoulder, and asked me if I knew of any remedy. I replied that I would consult a doctor friend about it, and in the course of the day called on Colonel Maynard, who told me to send the *sadhu* to him at the Medical College Hospital. The next morning I gave the man a letter for Colonel Maynard, and told him to make his way to the hospital, where he would be treated and cured. He said, "Yes, but you surely don't expect me to walk all that way; it's over a mile." I said of course not and gave him his tram fare in addition to his pay for the sitting.

When I returned after a trip to the Sandheads he posed once more and showed me his shoulder from which, thanks to Colonel Maynard's treatment, all trace of skin disease had disappeared. Some years later, when I was waiting for a tram to take me to Tollygunge, I was touched on the shoulder and, turning round, saw my old model, who asked me whether I wanted him to sit again. In reply to my enquiry he mentioned some of the places to which he had travelled since our last meeting, and said that he was once again busy with his religious duties at Kali Ghât.

But the Indians of whom I retain the pleasantest

recollections were my ship's boy, Syed Abbas Ali, and my Ooryia bearer. They were with me for many years before my retirement, and it would have been impossible to have found two better or more reliable servants. On the river and on the pilot vessel my comfort depended largely on the boy, who brought me my meals on the bridge, provided me with dry clothing if I got wet, made a bed up for me at night, and looked after me generally. When we arrived back at my abode, he handed me and my belongings over to the old bearer and departed to his own dwelling, coming back in the evening to see if we were going down the river again.

If I had been appointed to take some vessel away, it was sufficient to tell them both the hour at which I wanted to leave the house, and I could turn in with perfect confidence that when they called me my traps would have been packed and placed on the hackney carriage and there would be nothing for me to do but get dressed and depart. This went on for many years and they never once let me down in any way. The boy kept my purse, and made what disbursements were required for drinks or anything of that sort, handing me back the balance on return to town.

When I retired, they both decided to do the same. I gave them their choice of a small pension or a lump sum, and they elected to take the latter, and to buy two small bits of ground, on which to grow sufficient foodstuffs to keep them alive. They both came from Orissa, their villages being near Cuttack. Syed Abbas Ali wrote to me three or four times a year, until a couple of years ago, when his daughter informed me that he had died. The bearer, who was a much older man, died about a year after I left.

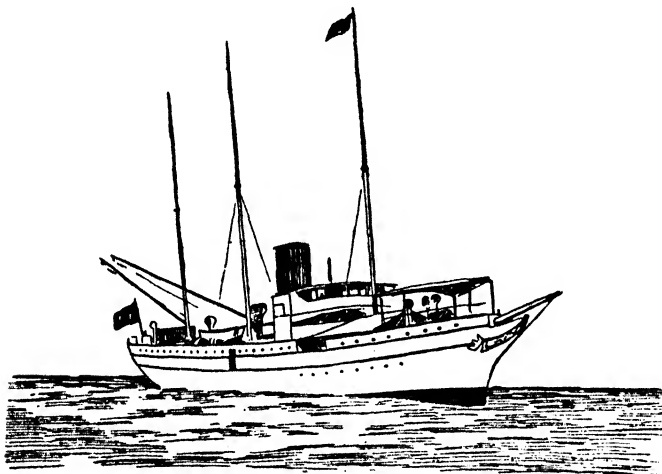
CHAPTER XXI

The *Fraser*—Our brigs become lightships—Ships fallen on live days—The *Clan MacArthur*—Tramp steamers—A swarm of quail—"Justice" in Texas—The gouging match—"Champion Ananias"—The *Bosnia*—The profitable *Monarch*.

By the time I reached the grade of Branch Pilot in 1900 conditions on the river were very different from what they had been when I joined the Service. The sailing ships had entirely deserted Calcutta, and with them had gone the fine tugs, and the splendid men who commanded them. The only two tugs remaining were the *Retriever* and *Rescue*, which had been bought by the Port Commissioners and were employed in the River Survey and in the port. Steamers had become much larger and deeper draughted. The men who had taught me my work had either taken their pensions or joined the great majority, and I had seen several generations of Harbour Masters come and go; for they wore out more quickly than we did, because their work was largely nocturnal, and they were always in the stuffy atmosphere of Calcutta. Some of the old sailing-ship lines had replaced their windjammers with steamers. Brocklebanks did so, and I remember one of their early steamers arriving at Calcutta officered entirely by captains of their sailing vessels, who were making the trip in order to learn how to run a steamer.

We were amused on the brig when we were told that the great Bully Mackenzie, a well-known old sailing-ship commander who had made many smart passages, had been seen tallying cargo at the new steamer's mainhatch.

Having made their voyage of instruction they were duly appointed to steamers, and doubtless found them a much easier job than the work they had been doing in sail. The Germans were getting a large slice of the trade of the port, and their steamers were becoming larger all the time. The French flag was only seen on the small steamer which the Messagerie Maritime ran between



“ LADY FRASER ”

Calcutta and Colombo. The Arab ships were nearly finished, and James Nourse was taking coolies to the West Indies in steamers instead of in the smart, well-found sailing ships with double crews which had done the work so well. This change was not altogether a change for the better. The voyage being shorter in steam, the coolies did not have so much chance of putting on flesh, and arriving in plump condition.

Sailing vessels having gone, it was merely a matter of time before the pilot brigs would follow them and

be replaced by steamers. In 1905 arrived the pilot steamer *Fraser*, named after the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. A handsome yacht-like vessel, painted white with a yellow funnel and three masts, she was fitted with wireless to send and receive messages, and with a refrigerator and cold storage. We did not regard this last altogether as a boon, for it meant no more gram-fed Sandheads' mutton, or well-fed poultry, and the messing was not so good in the opinion of some of our epicures. But we were now independent of the weather. Westerly gales made no difference to the steamer, and the weather had to be very bad indeed before we shut up shop and refused to put the boat out.

We had not yet entirely finished with the brigs, for when the *Fraser* went up to town to refit, she was relieved by a brig which kept the station until the return of the steamer. In 1908 came the second steamer, the *Lady Fraser*, and then we were entirely done with sail, and our brigs departed to become lightships as their predecessors had always done when past work at the Sandheads.

To a seafaring man it is always a pathetic sight to see a vessel which has fallen upon evil days, after having been a thing of beauty and a source of pride to all connected with her. As a leadsman I had hove the lead in one or two of the famous tea clippers which used to race home from China to be first in the market with their precious cargo of the new season's tea. With the opening of the Suez Canal their racing days were done, and with reduced spars, and a much smaller spread of canvas, they now picked up a living by wandering from port to port, like any other ocean tramp. One of these was the *Sir Lancelot*, and in spite of the way in which her sail plan had been reduced, I was surprised at the manner in which she slipped through the water with a very light wind as we sailed into Saugor. She held, if I am not mistaken, the record for the best day's run, and had now become

a 'country ship' trading between Calcutta and Mauritius. Another one was the *Pericles*, which had fallen from her high estate, and had her spars cut down.

But the fate of these ships was not so dismal as that of the S.S. *Clan MacArthur*, which had been one of the crack passenger steamers running to Calcutta from England. Having been sold to the Russians she was used by them in the whaling trade in Bering Strait, where she served as a sort of oil factory to which the blubber was brought to be boiled down and stowed in casks. She came in, to my turn, one breezy afternoon in the south-west monsoon. Age and probably ill-treatment had impaired the engines, which in the days of her prime had been the pride of her Scotch chief engineer, and she was coming to Calcutta to be patched up.

It was many years since I had last boarded her. She was then one of three popular passenger steamers belonging to the Clan Line (the other two were the *Clan Macpherson* and *Clan Matheson*) and was a smart, well kept-up vessel, with spotless decks, and a general air of prosperous self-respect. I had not heard anything of her for a long while and did not know what she had been doing, but as we pulled alongside I noticed that she looked as though she wanted a coat of paint, and as I climbed over the rail saw that she was in a very dirty and neglected condition. The people who received me at the gangway were foreigners, but I did not know what they were until I reached the bridge and learnt that she was now a Russian steamer. I took charge and set the course up-channel, and then had a conversation with the captain, who spoke English quite well and told me why they were coming to Calcutta.

When we were in the neighbourhood of the Lower Middle Ground Buoy the engineer came on the bridge and I was told that we should have to stop for an hour or two to effect some necessary repairs to the engines. There was a good sea running and it was not at all the

sort of place in which I cared to anchor, so I asked them to hold on if possible for a while until we got to Saugor anchorage. They said that the engines would stop of their own accord directly, so I turned round to head the tide and we brought up with forty-five fathoms of chain.

On going below I saw how greatly the *Clan MacArthur* had altered for the worse. The long line of passengers' cabins had disappeared. The saloon was still there but indescribably frowsy and dirty. In one corner was an ikon, and a couple of monkeys were walking about as though they owned the place, as they practically did. I joined the captain and officers at their evening meal, at which they drank neat gin and seemed surprised when I restricted myself to one glass of the fiery liquid. When the ebb made down, we lay in the trough of the sea and did some heavy rolling, and I was not sorry when the engineer reported the engines in working order again and we were able to heave up and proceed over the ebb to Saugor, where we brought up for the night.

We weighed at daybreak, but on the way up had to stop three or four times on account of the engines, the last time being at Pir Serang, where I had to anchor for an hour. When I handed over to the Harbour Master I told him that the engines kept breaking down, and as I left the vessel he hailed me from the bridge that they had gone wrong again.

The people in the tramp steamers who wandered about all over the world, putting into all sorts of strange ports in search of cargoes, had some queer tales to tell of the places they visited and the people they encountered in the course of their travels. The mate of a tramp told me the following extraordinary story. He said that one day in the Black Sea, when on watch, he noticed a dark cloud to the northward which approached with great rapidity, looking for all the world, he said, like the north-west squall which we had experienced on the previous evening. But instead of a violent squall of

wind and rain they were suddenly invaded by millions of migrating quail, which, exhausted by their long flight, sought shelter on the vessel. In a few minutes the decks were piled up with the birds to a depth of two or three feet, and still they came. All hands including the firemen had to turn to with shovels to get the decks cleared, and they all lived on quails for a week afterwards. It may be that the man exaggerated. He looked a stolid, weather-beaten old salt and not at all an imaginative sort of person. But one cannot always judge by appearances, and, as a Yankee skipper once wisely remarked to me, "You can't tell by the look of a toad how far it can jump."

I gathered from what I was told by these ocean wanderers that the manner in which law and justice were administered was somewhat peculiar in certain ports. At least it struck me as being peculiar. An interesting instance was given me by a dry little clean-shaven man who was in command of one of the steamers which it fell to my lot to take up the Hooghly. The case which he narrated was as follows. On one of his voyages, the steward stole some of his property, money, trinkets and clothing. The stolen articles were found in the steward's cabin, and there could be little doubt as to his being the thief. On arriving at their port of destination, a port in Texas, he handed the man over to the police, and was advised of the date on which the case would be heard.

On the morning of the appointed day, as the captain was about to go ashore, the stevedore who was loading the vessel asked if he could have a word with him. This stevedore was an old acquaintance, having been employed by the captain on previous voyages, when he had shown himself to be a reliable person and good at his job.

"Well," said the captain, "what is it?"

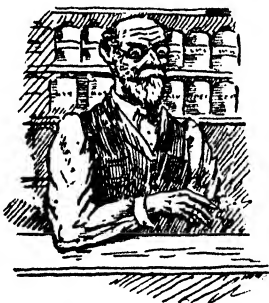
"It's about that steward of yours, captain. He's engaged Johnson the lawyer to defend him, and I guess you're going to lose your case."

"But," said the captain, "the evidence is dead against him. What can Johnson do?"

"He can get him off. He's the cutest lawyer in all Texas, and he ain't never lost a case yet!"

The stevedore seemed so positive as to the invincibility of the redoubtable Johnson that the captain thought that it would perhaps be advisable to engage a lawyer himself, and asked the stevedore if he could recommend one.

"'Tain't no good, cap.; none of the others has a dog's



MR. BROWN THE CHEMIST

chance against Johnson. . . . But," he added, "tell you what I'll do. I'll introduce you to Mr. Brown the chemist, he's a friend of mine."

"Mr. Brown the chemist!" said the astonished skipper. "What on earth can he do?"

"Well," said the friendly adviser, "he's got a big political pull, and he'll be able to fix this."

As the case was to be heard that morning there was no time to be lost, and the stevedore lead the way to the little shop where the powerful Mr. Brown made up prescriptions and sold remedies and poisons to the surrounding population. Mr. Brown's appearance gave no hint of the formidable power which he possessed. He was a small

man with a grey beard, and weak blue eyes framed in horn-rimmed spectacles.

"This," said the stevedore, "is Captain Jones of the steamer *Dalkey*. He's prosecuting his steward on a charge of theft and the steward has engaged Johnson to defend him. I shall be much obliged, Mr. Brown, if you'll see that Johnson don't get away with it."

Mr. Brown enquired when the case was coming on, and on being told consulted his watch, and said that they had better go along at once to the court, which was situated a short distance away.

They did not enter the room, in which a stout, red-faced man, who on account of the heat had removed his coat, was dispensing justice, but stood in the doorway and addressed the bench from there. The conversation was short and to the point.

"Morning, Judge," said Mr. Brown.

"Ah, Mr. Brown, good morning," said the Judge. "How are you?"

"I'm all right, Judge," said Mr. Brown. "This is the captain of the *Dalkey*, whose steward is coming before you this morning on a charge of theft. . . . The captain's a friend of mine."

"That'll be quite all right, Mr. Brown," said the Judge affably.

"Thank you, Judge," said Mr. Brown; "I thought it would."

He turned to leave, when a sudden thought seemed to strike him. He turned again, faced the Judge, and remarked:

"Six months, Judge?"

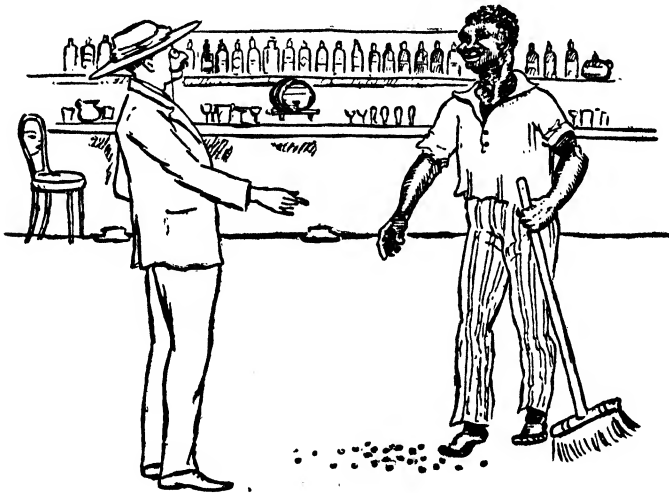
"That will be quite all right, Mr. Brown," said the legal dignitary.

And six months, said the captain, was the sentence which the steward received.

This tale was told me many years ago, and things are

probably quite different nowadays in Texas, where I do not suppose the following incident could now occur.

A young Englishman, so the story runs, came in the course of his travels to Galveston and spent the night in one of the best hotels there. It was a disturbed night, his rest being somewhat broken by the sounds of revelry which rose at intervals from the restaurant below. He



THE GLOBETROTTER AND THE NEGRO

managed to drop off at about three a.m., but was almost immediately startled into wakefulness by a succession of bloodcurdling yells which continued for several minutes. After that things were quieter, but his nerves had been rattled, and after tossing restlessly about for an hour or two, he decided to get up and go for a little walk in the fresh air. As he passed through the large hall of the restaurant, he noticed a negro busily engaged sweeping up some little round objects resembling marbles. Adjusting his monocle, for his sight was not too good, he said to the negro :

"Have they been playing marbles?"

"No!" said the darkie; "they had a gouging match, and them's eyes."

The horrified globe-trotter fled from the country without delay.

I was amused on board a tramp steamer which arrived from New York with case oil, and which I piloted to Budge Budge, by the captain's account of his experience with the newspaper reporters at the great American city. He arrived at New York after a voyage to the



THE CAPTAIN'S COLLECTION

South Sea Islands, in the course of which he had touched at a number of places which are very seldom visited, amongst them being the island of Owhyhee in the Sandwich group, the spot where the great Captain Cook came to a violent end at the hands of the natives on February 14th, 1779. Immediately after arriving at New York the steamer was boarded by a couple of reporters from the principal newspapers, who asked him to tell them something about his cruise in Polynesia. He had acquired

quite an interesting collection of curios in the way of canoe paddles, knives, bows and arrows, clubs, ornaments and earthenware utensils, which he produced for their inspection, inventing some little story in connection with each exhibit, which the simple-minded reporters accepted without demur. As they seemed prepared to swallow anything he chose to give them, he let himself go and thoroughly enjoyed himself, showing them amongst other precious relics a bracelet made from the whiskers of a missionary who had been barbecued, and the identical club with which Captain Cook had been massacred. When he had exhausted his power of invention the innocent



ANANIAS WILKINS

reporters took their leave with many expressions of gratitude, leaving him convulsed with merriment and feeling very pleased with himself.

His enjoyment, however, was somewhat marred on the following morning, when he opened the newspaper and read :

ARRIVAL IN PORT OF S.S. " DONEGAL " ; CHAMPION LIAR
ANANIAS WILKINS IN COMMAND.

These, however, are not the real names either of the steamer or of her commander, who told the story against himself.

The largest steamer which I handled during my time was a German named the *Bosnia*. She had four masts and a black funnel; I don't know what line she belonged to. She was taken up by W. T. Wawn and I was appointed to her by turn. She was lying at Mutteabrooj moorings and was to haul out at daybreak. I think it was in the month of September, but I know that it was in the freshets and the day after the moon, or fifth day of springs.

When I went on board I found the Harbour Master getting ready to unmoor. I asked him what her draught was and on learning that she was drawing twenty-seven feet three inches forward and twenty-seven feet aft told the captain that I wanted her to be three inches by the stern instead of by the head. He demurred at first, but as I was resolved not to leave with her in her present trim, he consented to run some water into the after ballast tanks and to trim her by the stern. As a matter of fact all her ballast tanks were empty and she was lying with a list, and there was no difficulty about altering her trim.

My reason for being so insistent about the draught was that, shortly before, I had had trouble with a steamer named the *Knight Bachelor*, which had been loaded two inches by the head. I had piloted this vessel several times before and had always found her steer quite well, so that when I was told that she was an inch or two by the head I did not worry about it, but hove up and turned round in the Reach with a light heart. As soon as she gathered way, I found that she was slow and sluggish in answering her helm. Just at that time the channel round Sankral bight had contracted and was narrower than usual owing to the encroachment of Sankral Sand, and it was necessary to keep close in to the bank before approaching the narrow spot. But the *Knight Bachelor* declined to do this, and was so slow in answering her port helm that we grounded on the extension of the sand,

and stuck there. W. Bryant, who was following me, on seeing that I was aground promptly put his helm hard a-port and stuck his steamer's nose up the bank just below the National Jute Mill. She swung round to the ebb, slipped off, and he steamed back to the Reach. The *Knight Bachelor* lay where she was quite comfortably until the tide rose, and she floated off. The engineers drove her all they could, and we got down to Kulpee. I attributed the grounding entirely to the fact that she was loaded by the head, and I was very chary ever after of leaving with a heavy-laden, flat-bottomed vessel in similar trim.

When the *Bosnia's* draught had been altered to twenty-seven two forward, and twenty-seven six aft, we unmoored and I took charge from the Harbour Master. She had a heavy list, which disappeared as we crossed Moyapur Bar with only a few inches more than our draught, and on reaching deep water returned again. She gave no trouble at all, steamed and steered quite well. We got to Kulpee the first day, Saugor the second, and out on the next tide. But when we were over the Gasper Bar and they started to fill the ballast tanks, she took a really serious list. I watched the captain as he studied the clinometer which was fixed to the binnacle and which registered a greater inclination which each lee roll which the vessel took, for we were going along in the trough of the sea, and I was glad when we were able to alter the course to bring her head to sea. I put the engines to slow and kept within boating distance of the Lower Gasper Light until she began to come upright, when we went ahead again and all was well. I have never had to do this with any other vessel.

The S.S. *Monarch* was another vessel to which I was appointed by turn, as the pilot who took her up did not want her, although she was drawing the lucrative draught of twenty-six eight. The trouble with her was that one could not rely on the engines going astern when

asked to do so. I was on turn and was told that the agents wanted to see me about her. On going to their office I was told that on account of the state of the steamer's engines I could have the tug *Retriever* to help me to turn her round, and to keep me company through the upper reaches of the river if necessary. I did not much fancy the job, for I was no fonder of trouble than other people, and preferred a comfortable, straight-forward bit of work without any extra risks.

When I went on board in the morning she struck me as being a very fine-looking steamer, in fact quite a handsome vessel. The Harbour Master, in answer to my enquiries, told me that the engines certainly took a little time to think it over before going astern, perhaps a minute or two, but that I could rely on their doing so in their own time. He had had no trouble with her. I therefore decided not to make use of the *Retriever*, which was standing by in the Reach, but to make sure that while turning round we never got into such a position as would render it imperative to go astern in a hurry. We went as close as possible to the northern bank and drifted until we were nearly dead in the water before putting the helm over and going slow ahead. As soon as her nose got into the strength of the current she commenced to turn quite nicely. The engines were slow in making up their minds to go astern, but they did so in ample time to keep her stern tucked into the bank, and she came head down without any trouble and in reasonable time. She steered beautifully and was a very nice vessel to pilot. We got to sea in two days without any difficulty.

On returning to town and calling at the agents' I was asked whether I thought that a couple of hundred rupees over and above the pilotage would meet the case. I thought that it would, and to my surprise was presented with two hundred and fifty. That was the only occasion on which such a thing ever happened to me, and is

probably the reason why I retain such a vivid recollection of my trip down in the S.S. *Monarch*.

I received a larger sum for sailing up the *Albyn*, for when the agents of that ship asked me how much I thought that I ought to have, I modestly said three hundred. Having received notes to that amount I invited the captain to share a bottle of wine, and while discussing it learnt from him that they had been prepared to part with four hundred. On both these occasions the vessels concerned had been saved a lot of expense for tug hire.

CHAPTER XXII

My only collision—The *Lismore* and *Venetia*—Big windjammers—The *Brilliant*—On the Gasper Bar—And off again—The two deserters.

It was on February 20th, 1906, that I had my one and only collision. This occurred as I was taking down a tramp steamer named *Venetia*, drawing about twenty-three feet and capable of steaming at her best between eight and nine knots.

The bar at the James and Mary had been shoaling up and I could not expect to have there more than a foot over my draught at the top of high water.

In view of the slow speed of the *Venetia* it behoved me to cross Moyapur Bar as soon as there was sufficient water to float the steamer, and it would then be necessary for the engine-room staff to do their best if we were to get across the James and Mary's. Should we fail to do so the steamer might be held up for several days, for the tides were 'taking off' and there would be less rise on the following day.

Another tramp steamer, the *Lismore*, which was leaving on the same day as the *Venetia*, was doing so under almost exactly similar conditions.

We turned round in good time, steamed slowly down to Moyapur, where we stopped and waited for the semaphore to show sufficient rise of tide to float us over the bar. The *Lismore* did the same; and as we waited side by side, the pilot of the *Lismore* told me that she was drawing three inches more than my vessel.

I told him that I would go over the bar as soon as

I had my water. He said that I had better let him go across first, for although he was drawing three inches more than us, his vessel had a six-inch keel, and was also faster than the *Venetia*. Of course I agreed and he led the way over Moyapur, closely followed by the *Venetia*. Before he got to Royapur we caught him up, but could not succeed in passing him. Thence onward both steamers went along side by side. This was a nuisance, as it entailed considerably more attention to the steering, but we could neither of us afford to ease down or give anything away, if we were to save the James and Mary's bar. I hoped that the *Lismore* would increase her speed and draw ahead. We kept each other company in this manner, going neck and neck through Fisherman's Point anchorage, past Fultah, and round Fultah Point.

After rounding the Point, I suggested that he should ease and let me go ahead, but he said that he could not afford to do that, which was perfectly true, and added that they were cleaning fires, and would draw ahead directly.

I then said that as we could not go round Nurpur in that manner two abreast, I would ease my engines. We did this, but still the *Lismore* failed to draw ahead. So I said, "All right ; I will stop, and go astern."

Having reversed our engines we at last managed to get behind the other steamer, but the action of the reversed engines had caused the *Venetia's* head to pay off to starboard, so we had to go slow ahead again with our helm to starboard to straighten up in the channel.

The *Lismore* seemed to be hardly moving through the water, for we began to overhaul her again as soon as our engines went ahead. I steadied the helm and then put it hard a-port, and as it looked as though we were going to be very close to the other steamer, put the engines full speed ahead to make the *Venetia* answer her helm.

Instead of doing so she ran up and hit the *Lismore* just abaft the bridge, pushing her right athwart the channel. We were then just above Nurpur Point.

Our engines were reversed until the two steamers separated. The *Lismore* then turned round with her port helm and proceeded back, and as soon as I saw a clear channel ahead, I rang the engines full-speed ahead, intending to go on and cross the Gut as there was still sufficient water showing at the semaphore. But the mate hailed me from the forecastle that we had a hole in the bow just above the water-line, so there was nothing for us to do but turn round, too, and follow the *Lismore* back to Fisherman's Point, where we both anchored for the night, returning to Calcutta on the following day for repairs. There was a court of enquiry, which I had to attend as a witness. Neither the pilot of the *Lismore* nor I was blamed for the collision.

I ran across the pilot of the *Lismore* a short time ago. It was many years since I had last seen him. Speaking of the collision, he agreed that it was unfortunate, but said that we were both trying to do our best for the vessels which we were piloting.

In the *Calcutta Statesman* of July 26th, 1912, the following appeared :

“ SAILING SHIP IN THE HOOGLY : FIRST FOR FIFTEEN YEARS.

“ For many years Calcutta has been regarded as one of the world's ports which it was impossible for sailing ships to trade to, and in consequence of this no sailing ship of any size has come up the Hooghly. Small schooners and Arab *dhows* from the Persian Gulf have traded here regularly, but the bigger ‘windjammers’ have kept away.

“ On Wednesday, however, the American ship *Brilliant*, said to be one of the biggest barques that has ever visited the East, arrived at Saugor, and it is expected

that she will be brought up the river to-day. The *Brilliant* is a four-masted American steel barque, commanded by Captain C. Morrison, and she has brought a cargo of about 5,000 tons of oil from Philadelphia. She is 352 feet long, with a beam of 56 feet, a displacement of 8,565 tons, and the hold is 28 feet deep.

"Her cargo consists of 111,000 cases of kerosine oil, and 21 tons of lubricating oil.

"On Wednesday the *Brilliant* arrived off the Eastern Channel Lightship, and Branch Pilot Beattie boarded her, but owing to the heavy seas running, the ship could not be anchored off the Sandheads. The pilot consequently had the very difficult task of sailing the vessel as far as Saugor Roads where she anchored.

"The Port Commissioners' tug-boat *Retriever* is being sent down to Saugor, to tow the *Brilliant* to Budge Budge, where she will discharge her cargo."

I had not boarded a sailing vessel for very many years, and certainly did not expect ever to handle one again on the Hooghly, but fate decreed that before retiring from the Service I should once more give the order, "Lee main brace!"

I had the first turn of Branch Pilots at the Sandheads, but when a sail was sighted to the southward did not feel particularly interested. Like everyone else on board the pilot steamer, I felt rather surprised, for sailing ships of any sort had long since ceased seeking a cargo at Calcutta. In any case, I could only take vessels of over 3,300 tons, and I did not know of any sailing ship of that tonnage. As she approached, it became evident from the size of her sails that she was a large ship, and the Senior Master Pilot of the turn showed signs of concern, and very naturally, for there were no longer powerful tugs, commanded by expert tugmasters to handle them, and to get a large sailing craft up to Calcutta was going to be a problem. But when she was close enough for her flags to be read, his anxiety was removed. She

was the *Brilliant*, 3,565 tons, with a cargo of oil, and I was sent off to her.

She certainly seemed large, and was drawing twenty-five feet six inches. The wind was fair from south-west when I boarded her, but it was about half-ebb, and I should not have enough water over the Gasper Bar until half-flood, so we hove-to on the port tack and waited until the flood made.

When we filled away and stood up-channel the wind was still south-west; but when we were about level with the Intermediate Light we got a heavy rain squall and the wind shifted to west-south-west. If the wind remained like that we were going to have a difficulty in getting through the Gasper, so we braced sharp up and luffed to hug the edge of the Middle Ground. The wind came, if anything, more to the westward, and it was as thick as a hedge. I had a leadsman with me, who kept the lead going. We were under topsails, topgallant-sails and foresail and were slipping through the water nicely. The leadsman kept singing out, "By the mark five," and although I could see nothing of the Lower Gasper Light, which was obscured by rain, I felt happy enough, for I knew that there would be enough water for us by the time that we reached the Gasper Bar. And by keeping well to windward on the western side of the channel we ought to be able to lay through, for she seemed to be a smart vessel. So I kept luffing up, and the leadsman kept giving me five fathoms. I have often blamed myself since for not taking the lead personally. The leadsman gave me "Quarter less five," and still I luffed up; for I was prepared to stand into four and a half fathoms or twenty-seven feet in my anxiety to get well to windward.

Suddenly I felt her touch the ground, and asked the leadsman what water he had got. He called out, "Quarter less five," but I knew that she was on the ground. We brailed in the spanker and squared the after-yards. Her

head payed off at once, and almost immediately we came clear and slipped through the water, to my very great relief. At the same time the weather lifted and I could see both the Gasper Lights. The lower one was bearing about east by north, between two and three miles. At the same time the wind shifted to south by west and remained so until we anchored abreast of Saugor Light.

I felt very sick at having grounded the ship, but it was no use saying anything to the leadsman. With the disappearance of the sailing vessels the lead had become much less important, and I don't suppose this particular man had had any practice in getting soundings in a seaway.

The next day the tug *Retriever*, which now belonged to the Port Commissioners and was used in the River Survey Service, came down and took us in tow, and considering that the officer in charge of her had had no experience in towing a vessel of any size, he did remarkably well, and we arrived at the Budge Budge oil moorings without any trouble.

When the *Brilliant* was ready to leave, the captain applied for me to take him down. I accepted the application but stipulated for two tugs for the first day. It was all very well for the *Retriever* to tow the ship up the river on the top of the flood tide, but I did not fancy being turned in the Reach and towed round Melancholy and Fultah Points by someone new to the game; so I decided to have a tug on each side and make a steamer of the ship. This plan answered perfectly. The *Brilliant* became for the time being a twin-screw steamer, and I conned her seated on the roof of the deckhouse on the poop. The second tug was the *Rescue*, which, like the *Retriever*, had been one of Turner Morrison's tugs and had also been purchased from them by the Port Commissioners, who used her to move vessels in the port. We lashed a tug on either side of the ship. The three of us abreast certainly took up a good deal of room, and

occupied most of the channel, but we got along quite well, and I do not think that we inconvenienced any of the vessels which we met.

We got to Kulpee, and lay at anchor there with our tugs alongside until the afternoon's tide, when we weighed and proceeded to Mud Point, where we cast off the tugs and anchored for the night. I decided to tow out from there with the *Retriever* ahead, so we discharged the *Rescue*.

In the morning, as we were taking in tow, I remarked to the captain that he had got together a heterogeneous collection of humanity to serve as crew. They were of all races and colours. "Yes," he replied; "but they were the best I could get," and added, "I expect by the end of the voyage those two deserters will have become the best sailormen of the lot." I became interested at this and asked him to point out the two men. It appeared that they belonged to the regiment stationed at Dum Dum just outside Calcutta. I told the captain that I would take the two men with me back to Calcutta, and that unless he agreed to let me have them, the ship would remain at anchor while I telegraphed to the Port Officer for instructions. He demurred at first, but finding that I was really in earnest, gave the required promise, so we hove-up and towed to sea.

When the boat from the pilot steamer came alongside, I asked him to call the two men aft. As they marched along the deck in step, there was no doubt about their calling. They were obviously soldiers, and smart, well set-up soldiers at that. When they were close to the break of the poop I said "Halt," and they stood to attention, while I told them to fetch their kitbags, and get into the boat. I felt sorry for the captain who was thus losing two of his complement, but I could not be a party to a couple of soldiers deserting. When we were pulling to the pilot vessel, I suggested that they should put on their helmets, as it was no use getting sunstroke. They

promptly fished them out of their bags and donned them. It was difficult to understand how they could have been so foolish as to desert, for they were both men of considerable service, and one of them was an N.C.O. On arrival at the steamer they were each given a bottle of iced beer, which probably comforted them a little. They went up that night with me in a steamer which came in to my turn, and as the Port Officer had been notified by wireless, they found an escort waiting to receive them at Calcutta, and they departed bearing a letter to their C.O. begging that they might be dealt with as leniently as possible, as they had returned quietly and without making any trouble. Probably they were not very sorry that they had been prevented from making that long voyage round the Cape, which would not have been altogether a joy ride.

I was destined to see the *Brilliant* once again. Shortly after the War had broken out in 1914, walking on the front at Eastbourne, I sighted a large ship running up-channel and remarked to the person with whom I was walking that she was a very large vessel and reminded me of a ship called the *Brilliant*. A couple of days later I read in the newspaper that it really was her. She had been sold to the Germans and was wending her way to Hamburg in blissful ignorance of the state of war, when she was captured and taken into Dover Harbour.

CHAPTER XXIII

A tribute to the Service—The immaculate pilot—I leave the Service—Conditions on the Hooghly to-day—Qualities of a good pilot—Indianising the Service—Pilots in the War—A chat with Jimmy Keymer—Envoi.

IN the *Pall Mall Gazette* of September 19th, 1911, under the heading 'The Bengal Pilot,' appeared a contribution from a writer who had made the passage down the Hooghly in a cargo steamer. It struck me as being a good sketch of one of my *confrères*, so I kept it and reproduce some extracts from it here. It runs as follows :

"Ships leaving Calcutta anchor off Garden Reach to await the tide. It is here that the pilot arrives on board. Let it be carefully noted that he *arrives*—he does not come, he is too great a man. He arrives in State, accompanied by his Leadsman and his servant. For the Bengal Pilot Service is different to other services. Its senior members—Branch Pilots they are called—earn from two to three thousand rupees a month (the latter when trade is good and ships are plentiful), and a man who earns the salary which a civilian does not attain until he becomes a Commissioner of Division is entitled to much respect. He demands this respect, and exacts it from everybody indiscriminately.

"The *Amaryllis* was on time-charter, carrying coal between Calcutta and Bombay, and I was her only passenger, when the pilot arrived on board at Garden Reach. He arrived in all the glory of a beautifully-starched white suit, and a resplendently varnished solar topee of imposing dimensions. In appearance he was tall and lanky (wire all through), with a clean-shaven,

clear-cut, tanned face, that would have become a naval officer and at once conveyed the impression that its owner was a strong man. He gave his orders in a curt, quiet manner, and in five minutes we were under way.

"I learnt to admire that pilot long before we parted with him at the brig off the Sandheads. Despite the coal dust which lay everywhere, and covered everything at least one inch thick in grime, his immaculate suit managed to retain, somehow or other, all its spotless purity, and although the sweltering heat was sufficient to make the most stiffly-starched collar scragged and limp, the starch in his held out until the end.

"I was filled with a great longing to mount the bridge and ask him respectfully to admit me to the secret by which all this was achieved, but fortunately for myself I recollected in time that I was only a passenger on a tramp collier, while he was a member of the great Bengal Pilot Service. I therefore dusted off some of the grime which had settled upon my easy-chair on the poop, wiped some smuts off my nose, and in doing so smudged my cheek all over, and settled myself down comfortably to watch my pilot and his ways.

"He stood under the awning over the bridge with telescope at his eye, watching intently the various signals which were placed along the banks of the Hooghly to intimate the different depths of water obtaining in the stream. Ever and anon, on the sultry breeze, the voice of his leadsman rose and fell: "By the mark five." "And a half four." "By the mark four," and so on. Ever and anon he rasped out some curt order, which the subservient mate of the watch passed on to the man at the wheel; round went the spokes with many creaks and groans, and the snub nose of the old *Amaryllis* swung off two or three points on to another course. All of which as a mere landsman I found vastly interesting.

"Gradually as the day wore on we slipped down the muddy Hooghly, and gradually and by degrees the colour

of the flowing waters changed from a dirty, evil-looking brown, to a more refreshing green, showing that slowly but surely our pilot was bringing us out to sea. As the shades of night fell (swiftly as is their habit in the East) we anchored at Mud Point—the dreary, dismal-looking expanse of mud-covered shore visible from the ship emphatically justifying the name. The pilot came down to the cuddy to dinner, and afterwards unbent just a little, proving that he was a good fellow. He discussed the skippers of other ships on the coast with the captain, and the slump in the Bengal coal market with me. Like most of us in Calcutta, he had been tempted to his fall, had speculated in coal shares, and was loaded up with many thousands of rupees' worth of Sudamdih, Bilbera, Phularitand and Sinidih shares, all of which were a bad investment for him, as he had bought during the boom at prices ranging from ten to fifteen rupees each. Which goes to prove that my pilot was essentially human; first, in that his two to three thousand rupees a month salary was insufficient for him, and he desired to grow rich quickly by means of speculation, and, secondly, in that he had been sufficiently foolish to allow shares of nebulous value to be unloaded on him in a falling market. I advised him to desist, whereupon he became positively chilly. He did not require advice. My pilot was very, very human.

“Next morning on the bridge he was the same unapproachable, impeccable figure he had been the day before—telescope to eye, jerking out sharp orders, the temporary master of the ship. At dusk we sighted the pilot brig and rapidly drew up to her. From on board came sounds of music, then a burst of song. The life of a Bengal Pilot, even at sea, is not all work. A boat shot out, came alongside of us, the pilot clambered down into it, and the rowers gave way.

“The mate on the bridge turned the handle of the engine-room telegraph, and sounded full-speed ahead.

From the bowels of the ship came an answering ring. The snout of the *Amaryllis* swung round sou'west and by south, and we sped away in the rapidly gathering gloaming towards our destination."

I retired from the Service in 1913, and since then all sorts of changes have taken place. The river has been lighted from Calcutta to Moyapur, and from Hospital Point to sea, and the Service has been put on pay instead of receiving fifty per cent. of the pilotage. A lot of the work is now done at night, for which extra night fees are paid. The bars in the upper part of the river are kept open by powerful dredgers, and the steamers coming to the port are larger and draw more water.

The following extract from a letter received from one of the Senior Branch Pilots last October will give some idea of what the work is now like :

"During about seven months of the year, owing to the deterioration of Sankral Reach, Pir Serang and Poojali crossings, all ships over—say—25 feet draught go to Ooloobaria anchorage at night. Swing flood next morning and proceed.

"Draughts of 30 feet are common. The maximum so far is, I believe, 31 feet 3 inches. The Middleton Bar below Saugor is the shoalest spot—at present 14 feet 9 inches at lower water, but has been 13 feet 6 inches.

"The usual procedure for a 28-foot ship would be : leave Garden Reach, straight out of dock, or from the Garden Reach jetties, at half-flood at night. Anchor at Ooloobaria at high-water slack. Swing ebb. Swing flood next morning, and go to Kulpee. Leave there at night and go to Saugor. And out to sea on the next morning's tide. All ships navigating at night above the Eastern Channel Light pay a night fee, and vessels that have to go to Ooloobaria at night pay an additional night fee. The Service is in good fettle. A good type of keen, energetic men, but overworked. The night work is taking its toll, and people are cracking up earlier than

they used to. One man aged 45, and another of 46½, have applied for their pensions, as they cannot stand the work. The Government have decided to abolish recruitment from England. The last home appointment was nearly three years ago.

"They have cut the pay for future entrants to an absurd figure. Maximum pay, rupees 1,300 after 28 years' service. The present maximum pay is rupees 2,200 per mensem, plus £80 a month overseas' pay, plus night fees which vary, and may amount to rupees 500 a month, and plus four first-class return passages, Bombay to London, during 30 years' service. None of these allowances, even night fees, are to be given to future candidates."

As I have stated earlier in this book, the Service has been recruited in all sorts of ways, and very casually. The strength would be allowed to dwindle, and then the authorities would wake up and bring in a lot of people, some of whom would make good, and some would prove unsuited to the work. For it is not every man who possesses the qualities essential to a successful pilot. Of the men who joined after myself from the training ships, quite a large percentage dropped out from one cause or another, and comparatively few reached the grade of Branch Pilot. With the lighting up of the river, there can be no question that the work which was always strenuous has become much more so and will call for men of very tough fibre in addition to the ordinary qualities of nerve and quick-wittedness.

I have a letter in my possession from my old Commander, Mr. R. C. Rutherford, dated 1920, and written not long before he died. In it he speaks with bitterness of the introduction of the Licensed Pilots, and says: "It was a wicked act and a breach of faith with us, as we joined a service with closed grades."

It was not until I was nearly half-way through with this record of my recollections of life on the Hooghly that I learnt with surprise that the Government were

introducing Indian recruits to the Bengal Pilot Service. I suppose that I ought not to have been surprised, but I was.

My mentality probably resembles that of the beadle of the Scotch parish, who when asked if he could recommend a good reliable beadle to replace one who had just died in a neighbouring parish replied, "Now if you asked me to find you an elder or twa, or even a Meenister, I could have suited you fine; but to get a really responsible *beadle* is well nigh an impossibeelity."

I knew, of course, that the Army was being Indianised, and the Indian Civil Service. We all had the greatest admiration for the Indian Civil Service, and I recollect a discussion on the brig, at the conclusion of which we agreed that if the British Empire had produced nothing more than that efficient, incorruptible and devoted Service, with its wonderful record of pure administration, it would have justified its existence. But together with the other Services it was being Indianised, and I thought that although it would probably lose somewhat in efficiency, it would still function, in the same way that a boy's watch may still go after its inquisitive little owner has poked its works about with a pin. But it never occurred to me that the Bengal Pilot Service would be interfered with.

It would be absurd to suppose that among the three hundred million inhabitants of Hindustan there are not thousands who would make excellent Hooghly pilots. I had the good fortune during the War to spend eighteen months in France with Pathans and Punjabis who had been recruited for the Indian Labour Corps, and amongst them were men who would have made excellent sailormen.

I may mention here that many of the Bengal pilots volunteered to serve with the troops during the War of 1914-18. Some of them were given commissions in the Royal Engineers, for inland water transport, and did useful work in Mesopotamia and in Belgium, reaching

the rank of Major and being awarded the D.S.O. Others were employed as transport officers in various ports, or served afloat.

* * * * *

Recently after an evening spent in jotting down the fruits of retrospection, I turned in and dreamt a dream of the Sandheads. The sun was just rising, through the early morning mist of a day in the north-east monsoon. There was a nice little breeze to put a ripple on the water and impart a feeling of freshness and vigour. Just below me was the Eastern Channel Light, about a mile to the westward the pilot steamer *Lady Fraser*, and away to the northward the smoke of a steamer inward-bound. I planed down towards a group of big grey gulls who were sitting placidly together and had not yet commenced the business of the day, the chase of the succulent bumalo. As I approached them and caught a glimpse of my reflection I saw that I was one of the Brotherhood myself. Instinctively and without any hesitation I addressed myself to a big fellow who was sitting slightly apart from the rest.

“ Mr. Keymer, I think ? ”

“ That’s me,” he replied ; “ and I never forget a friend, and well remember the day when you were taking the *Drum Druid* up. I had just caught a fine bumalo, and, being chased by George Smart, clumsily collided with the steamer’s foremast, and fell half-stunned on the deck. You very kindly came down off the bridge, picked up my fish, handed it to me, and enquired whether I could get up off the deck without assistance. It seems like yesterday, but it must be more than thirty years ago. And now you have come to join us. You will find them all here. There’s Le Patourel, sitting beside Lidstone. Next to them are Ben Revett, Bond and Kendal. The chap who looks as though he had not finished moulting is Jock Taylor. Yes, we are all here.”

"Things have altered a bit since your time, Mr. Keymer?" I observed.

"Yes," he replied, "and they are going to alter a lot more unless I am very much mistaken. But we need not worry about it. We can safely leave the Service in the hands of Mother Gunga, who will see to it that her pilots are Masters of their Craft."

"What is your opinion, Mr. Keymer, about the present scheme of Indianising the Service?"

"It seems only fair," he replied, "that the people of the country should be given a chance of doing the work, or of showing whether they are able to do it. But I think it unfair to restrict the Service entirely to Indians, to the exclusion of all the other sailormen of the Empire. Calcutta and the Bengal Pilot Service are both the result of British energy and enterprise. The men who created them were certainly not afflicted with that distressing malady, the inferiority complex. So long as the City of Calcutta exists, it will be necessary to maintain an efficient service of pilots to give access to it from the sea!"

I was about to ask his opinion as to remuneration, but the scene faded away, and on opening my eyes I found that I had been awakened by a fool of a bluebottle who, having found his way into my room by the open window, appeared unable to find his way out again.

But I have no doubt that Mr. Keymer would share my own opinion, which is, that if you want a really good article, you must pay for it.

In conclusion, I wish good luck to the men, whatever their race or complexion, who are destined in the future to conduct the traffic up and down the Hooghly.



JIMMY KEYMER



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LIST of Branch Pilots from 1847 to 1888, showing the date on which they joined the Service.

S. Ransom	1821	B. K. Revett	1848
J. Bartlett	1823	A. Bond	1848
W. R. T. Stout	1826	C. G. Smyth	1848
J. Keymer	1827	G. Lord	1848
J. Higgins	1828	W. F. Stone	1844
J. M. Hamilton	1834	R. B. Yates	1845
C. A. Beaumont	1835	H. A. Merritt	1846
R. F. Barlow	1835	C. B. Ransom	1847
J. P. T. Porter	1835	R. Scott	1847
W. Lang	1835	R. M. Daly	1848
T. Smart	1836	C. Matson	1850
J. Hooper	1837	O. H. Bensley	1851
G. B. Smart	1838	R. S. Long	1851
A. P. Sandiman	1839	A. J. B. Milner	1852
J. B. Filby	1836	J. P. B. Le Patourel	1845
C. W. Warden	1837	R. S. Evans	1852
C. Rogers	1842	O. Lash	1853
H. S. Ransom	1841	R. C. Rutherford	1853
W. Davis	1841	C. Heard	1853
G. Noaks	1841	J. R. Wells	1854
W. H. Fielder	1841	J. Taylor	1854
J. A. Ralph	1841	W. H. Lindquist	1854
G. B. Youngs	1842	H. J. Philips	1854
W. H. Gill	1843	J. Dyer	1855
C. Howell	1842	J. Barnett	1854
W. E. Revett	1842	W. O. B. West	1853
J. Vincent	1842	W. K. Douglas	1856
A. Scott	1843	F. Ancell	1856
G. Collins	1843	D. J. Scott	1856
W. Lloyd	1843	W. A. Symons	1856
W. J. Etheridge	1842	R. Rust	1857
T. Gernon	1843	C. Collingwood	1857
J. C. Priddle	1843	S. Ransom	1857
G. Saunders	1843		

APPENDIX B

LIST of men who have joined since S. Ransom, showing the date on which they joined. Licensed Pilots marked L and Covenanted Pilots marked C.

L D. F. Miller . . 1858
 C J. S. S. Sherman 1857
 C C. S. Mills . . 1857
 C G. M. Anderson. 1858
 L S. R. Elson . . 1861
 C A. Hough . . 1858
 C F. F. Collingwood 1858
 C E. F. Hudson . 1859
 L R. A. Wortley . 1862
 L H. Lindquist . 1863
 C J. T. Broadhead. 1859
 C T. Reddie . . 1859
 C F. T. Rayner . 1859
 C G. Burn . . . 1860
 C J. Christie . . 1860
 L M. McCaskill . 1859
 L L. P. Goodwyn . 1863
 L F. C. Cooper. . 1863
 C W. R. Williams. 1861
 L C. A. Lidstone . 1865
 L F. D. Bellew . 1865
 C N. T. Wawn. . 1860
 L P. Paulson . . 1864
 L J. D. Bennett . 1865
 L J. H. Jones . . 1861
 L R. H. Shelverton 1867
 L A. Marshall . . 1876
 L W. T. Wawn . 1876
 L A. Mauger . . 1876

L W. B. Ewin . . 1876
 L H. Huntly . . 1876
 L L. F. G. Smyth . 1876

The Service was then recruited from the two training ships, *Worcester* and *Conway*.

C. C. Collingwood . 1877
 A. J. Gillman . . 1877
 C. G. Stock . . . 1877
 H. Bent 1877
 J. Kirkman . . . 1877
 F. L. Puttock . . 1877
 F. T. Paine . . . 1877
 H. M. Cox 1878
 M. H. Beattie . . 1878
 G. F. Alexander . 1878
 E. J. A. Shaw . . 1879
 R. A. Hopkins . . 1879
 A. W. J. Turner . 1879
 J. C. M. Skinner . 1877
 H. V. Allen . . . 1879
 W. H. Ridler. . . 1880
 W. Collingwood . 1880
 F. H. Butler . . . 1879
 S. T. Porter . . . 1880
 I. A. B. Mackinnon . 1880

APPENDIX B

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W. L. Cousens . . .	1881	S. J. K. Chase . . .	1887
E. W. J. Bartlett . .	1878	C. F. Keys . . .	1887
I. S. Wells . . .	1882	W. H. D. Allison . .	1890
P. W. Anketell-Jones	1882	R. S. Smyth . . .	1890
J. J. Page . . .	1882	H. D. Lindquist . .	1890
J. Sherman . . .	1883	J. F. Fox . . .	1891
E. O. Manning . . .	1883	E. P. Bryant. . .	1892
J. F. D. Ball . . .	1884	R. S. M. Curran . .	1891
G. U. Mellard . . .	1884	H. G. H. Bartlett . .	1892
H. S. Tozer . . .	1884	H. G. Fox . . .	1892
T. S. Earl . . .	1885	H. Ancell . . .	1892
W. Bryant . . .	1886	F. W. Moore . . .	1893
C. G. Budge . . .	1886	J. Hudson . . .	1893
G. F. Thorpe. . .	1886	A. W. Michie. . .	
H. E. Mackenzie. .	1887	P. J. Wilson . . .	
J. H. Lindquist . .	1887	H. Ancell . . .	

APPENDIX C

AFTER H. Ancell it was decided to recruit the Service from men who had served their time at sea, and had passed the Board of Trade examination for Second Mate.

A. F. Paull
E. A. Ward
A. J. R. Coachafer
C. E. Champness
S. Prior
S. A. Glanly
A. J. W. Ward
H. A. Cooper
S. H. Reaks
J. D. Allison
W. L. Allnutt
F. Lungly
C. T. Parke
A. H. Mauger
F. J. Fisher
C. A. D. Greenland
C. B. Owens
A. J. May
C. W. H. Ansell
H. L. Emmerson
V. Cooper
W. H. O'Brien

F. T. Hart
E. G. Bacon
G. Golding
D. I. Halford
G. S. Scoby
A. H. Dove
P. Ridly
D. L. Vine
J. C. P. Rawlins
F. H. A. Lendrum
L. J. Macdonald
W. C. Mayston
W. M. Taylor
J. S. Davis
W. R. McClymont
G. Purrott
G. T. Labey
E. E. King
N. E. Garnett, 1916, is the
present Junior Branch
Pilot.

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
MACKAYS LIMITED, CHATHAM

